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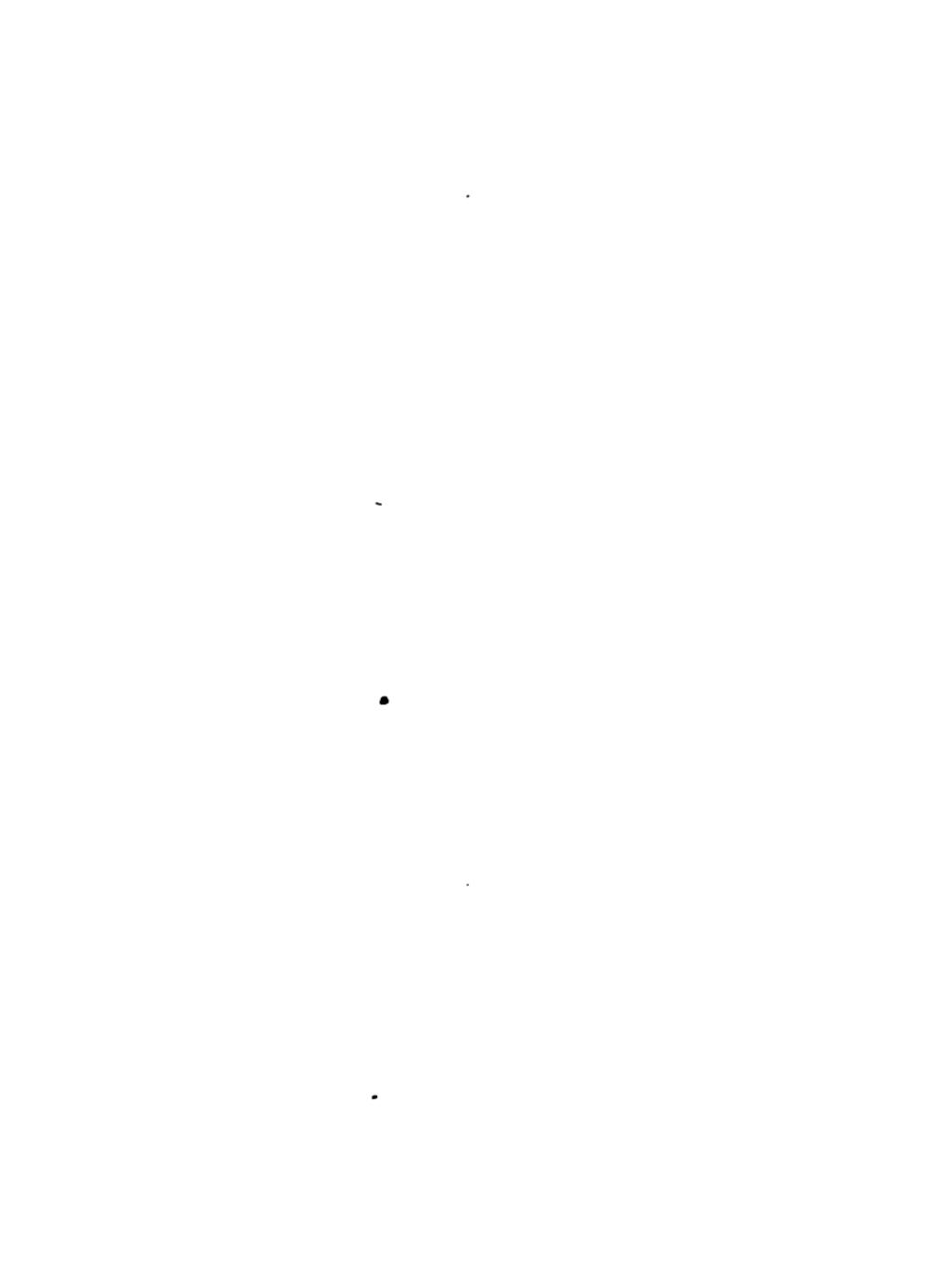
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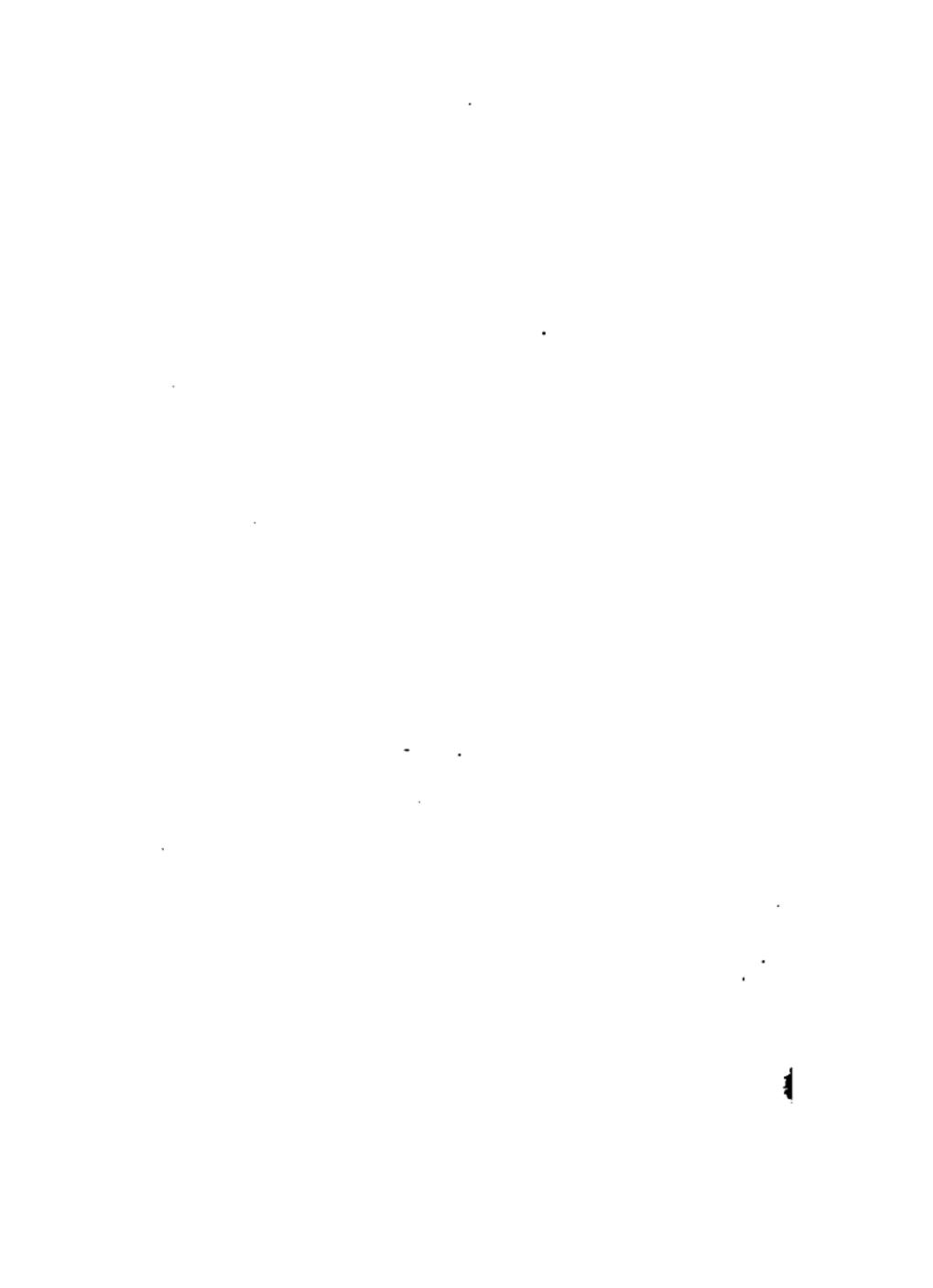


43.887.









Holy Matrimony,

ITS

DUTIES AND DIGNITY.



HOLY MATRIMONY,

ITS

DUTIES AND DIGNITY

AS SET FORTH BY

The English Church.



through infusion sweete
Of thine owne spirit —
I follow here the footing of thy feete,
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meeete.

LONDON :
DARTON AND CLARK, HOLBORN HILL.

1843.

**EX OFF.
H. W. MARTIN, BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS,
LONDON.**

TO THE READER.

GENTLE READER:—The Athenian bride plucked with her own hands the violets, or roses, or what other flowers were to form her wedding-garland: so did the Roman maiden, gathering from holy ground the vervain for her bridal crown: and their bridegrooms, too, crowned both their own heads and the doors of the new homes into which they received their brides, with like chaplets of flowers. The Church, ever wont to see in such innocent and beautiful customs the first dawnings which preceded the rising of her own brighter light, gladly preserved this rite too, only taking the crowns into her

own holy hands that she might herself place them, truly consecrated, on the heads of her newly married children. Perhaps the custom, long continued in the Latin church, still lingers in the vallies of Switzerland : at least, it is yet retained by the Greek church, whose minister still puts the crown—of myrtle or of olive—on the head of the bride and bridegroom with the solemnest form of benediction, adding, as he joins their hands, The Lord your God crown you with glory and honour. And if, with a wisely austere simplicity, our own Church has not given us this form in her ritual, not the less has she striven in that holy service to imbue our hearts with the spirit of it : therefore it seemed to me not unfitting that when the bridal train was going forth from my house, and I would accompany it with some *memorial token of love lasting, and ever to*

last, where duty was now fulfilled or transferred to more serviceable hands than mine—it seemed not unfitting, not forbidden by the Church to one of her sons, that he should gather a wreath from her own garden planted in our land, nor that he should mix with her holy flowers others from the neighbouring meadows of Poesy and Philosophy, where, not without her life-giving influence, the flowers of English piety and wisdom and learning bloom with unfading beauty. Some of these I have plucked where they first grew, and caring less whether they were common than whether they were pleasant to the eye, and of fragrant smell; others from that ground whither I had before transplanted their roots, or sown their seeds. None can I call properly my own; and happy shall I be if it prove not that my rude hands have marred the delicate blossom or bud of

some flower of which every stem and leaf is precious : happier still, if this bridal wreath, accepted by those for whom it was first twined, shall be deemed worthy of like honour by thee, Gentle Reader, whoever thou art, of my countrymen and countrywomen, to whom I now present it. ‘ If I have done well, and as is fitting, it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto.’

Gentle Reader, I bid thee farewell :

Thy loving servant,

EDWARD STRACHRY.

THE FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

¶ First the Banns of all that are to be married together must be published in the Church three several Sundays, during the time of Morning Service, or of Evening Service, (if there be no Morning Service,) immediately after the Second Lesson; the Curate saying after the accustomed manner,

I publish the Banns of Marriage between M. of —— and N. of ——. If any of you know cause, or just impediment, why these two persons should not be joined together in holy Matrimony, ye are to declare it. This is the first [second, or third] time of asking.

¶ And if the persons that are to be married dwell in divers Parishes, the Banns must be asked in both Parishes; and the Curate of the one Parish shall not solemnize Matrimony betwixt them, without a Certificate of the Banns being thrice asked, from the Curate of the other Parish.

¶ At the day and time appointed for solemnization of Matrimony, the persons to be married shall

come into the body of the Church with their friends and neighbours: and there standing together, the Man on the right hand, and the Woman on the left, the Priest shall say,

D EARLY beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all

men : and therefore is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding ; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God ; duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.

First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication ; that such persons as have not the gift of contingency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

Into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. *Therefore if any man can*

shew any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

¶ And also speaking unto the persons that shall be married, he shall say,

I Require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful.

¶ At which day of Marriage, if any man do alledge and declare any impediment, why they may not be coupled together in Matrimony, by God's Law, or the Laws of this Realm ; and will be bound, and sufficient sureties with him, to the parties ; or else put in a

Caution (to the full value of such charges as the persons to be married do thereby sustain) to prove his allegation : then the solemnization must be deferred, until such time as the truth be tried.

¶ If no impediment be alledged, then shall the Curate say unto the Man,

M. **W**ILT thou have this Woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony ? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live ?

¶ The Man shall answer, I will.

¶ Then shall the Priest say unto the Woman,

N. **W**ILT thou have this Man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony ? Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honour, and keep him

in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live ?

¶ The Woman shall answer, I will.

¶ Then shall the Minister say,

Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man ?

¶ Then shall they give their troth to each other in this manner.

The Minister, receiving the Woman at her father's or friend's hands, shall cause the Man with his right hand to take the Woman by her right hand, and to say after him as followeth.

I M. take thee N. to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance ; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

¶ Then shall they loose their hands ; and the Woman, with her right hand tak-

ing the Man by his right hand, shall likewise say, after the Minister,

I N. take thee M. to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

¶ Then shall they again loose their hands; and the Man shall give unto the Woman a Ring, laying the same upon the book with the accustomed duty to the Priest and Clerk. And the Priest, taking the Ring, shall deliver it unto the Man, to put it upon the fourth finger of the Woman's left hand. And the Man holding the Ring there, and taught by the Priest, shall say,

WITH this Ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,*

and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

¶ Then the Man leaving the Ring upon the fourth finger of the Woman's left hand they shall both kneel down; and the Minister shall say,

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life; Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this Man and this Woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that, as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, (whereof this Ring given and received is a token and pledge,) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ Then shall the Priest join their right hands together, and say,

Those whom God hath

joined together, let no man put asunder.

¶ Then shall the Minister speak unto the people.

FORASMUCH as *M.* and *N.* have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a Ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce that they be Man and Wife together, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ And the Minister shall add this Blessing.

GOD the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favour look upon you: and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

¶ Then the Minister or Clerks, going to the Lord's

Table, shall say or sing this Psalm following.

Beati omnes. Psal. cxlviii.

BLESSED are all they that fear the Lord: and walk in his ways.

For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.

Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine: upon the walls of thine house;

Thy children like the olive-branches round about thy table.

Lo, thus shall the man be blessed: that feareth the Lord.

The Lord from out of Sion shall so bless thee: that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity all thy life long;

Yea, that thou shalt see thy children's children: and peace upon Israel.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

As it was in the beginning, &c.

¶ Or this Psalm.

Deus misereatur. Ps. lxvii.

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us: and shew us the light of his

countenance, and be merciful unto us.

That thy way may be known upon earth : thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God : yea, let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad : for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the people praise thee, O God : yea, let all the people praise thee.

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase : and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing.

God shall bless us : and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

As it was in the beginning, &c.

¶ The Psalm ended, and the Man and the Woman kneeling before the Lord's Table, the Priest standing at the Table, and turning his face towards them, shall say,
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Answer. Christ, have mercy upon us.

Minister. Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Minister. O Lord, save thy servant, and thy handmaid ;

Answer. Who put their trust in thee.

Minister. O Lord, send them help from thy holy place ;

Answer. And evermore defend them.

Minister. Be unto them a tower of strength.

Answer. From the face of their enemy.

Minister. O Lord, hear our prayer.

Answer. And let our cry come unto thee.

Minister.
O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,

bless these thy servants, and sow the seed of eternal life in their hearts; that whatsoever in thy holy Word they shall profitably learn, they may in deed fulfil the same. Look, O Lord, mercifully upon them from heaven, and bless them. And as thou didst send thy blessing upon Abraham and Sarah, to their great comfort, so vouchsafe to send thy blessing upon these thy servants; that they obeying thy will, and alway being in safety under thy protection, may abide in thy love unto their lives' end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ This Prayer next following shall be omitted, where the Woman is past child-bearing.

O Merciful Lord, and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gift mankind is increased; We beseech thee, assist with thy blessing these two persons, that they may both be fruitful in procreation of children, and also live together so long in godly love and honesty, that they may see their children christianly and virtuously brought up, to thy praise and honour; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who by thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing; who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint, that out of man (created after thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning; and, knitting them together, didst teach that it should never be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by Matrimony hadst made one: O God, who hast consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church; Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that both this man may love his wife, according to thy Word, (as Christ did love his spouse the Church, who gave himself for it, loving and cherishing it even as his own flesh,) and also that this woman may be loving and amiable, faithful and obedient to her husband; and in all quietness, sobriety,

and peace, be a follower of holy and godly matrons. O Lord, bless them both, and grant them to inherit thy everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then shall the Priest say,

ALMIGHTY God, who at the beginning did create our first parents, Adam and Eve, and did sanctify and join them together in marriage; Pour upon you the riches of his grace, sanctify and bless you, that ye may please him both in body and soul, and live together in holy love unto your lives' end. *Amen.*

TAfter which, if there be no Sermon declaring the duties of Man and Wife, the Minister shall read as followeth.

ALL ye that are married, or that intend to take the holy estate of Matrimony upon you, hear what the holy Scripture doth say as touching the duty of husbands towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands.

Saint Paul, in his Epistle

to the Ephesians, the fifth Chapter, doth give this commandment to all married men; Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself: for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself.

Likewise the same Saint

Paul, writing to the Colossians, speaking thus to all men that are married ; Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Hear also what Saint Peter, the Apostle of Christ, who was himself a married man, saith unto them that are married ; Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge ; giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Hitherto ye have heard the duty of the husband toward the wife. Now likewise, ye wives, hear and learn your duties toward your husbands, even as it is plainly set forth in holy Scripture.

Saint Paul, in the afore-named Epistle to the Ephesians, teacheth you thus ; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church : and he is the Saviour of the body.

Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. And again he saith, Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.

And in his Epistle to the Colossians, Saint Paul giveth you this short lesson : Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Saint Peter also doth instruct you very well, thus saying : Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands ; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives ; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel ; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible ; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women

XVI FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

also, who trusted in God, him lord ; whose daughters adorned themselves, being ye are as long as ye do well, in subjection unto their own and are not afraid with any husbands ; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling

¶ *It is convenient that the new-married persons should receive the holy Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first opportunity after their Marriage.*

Thus saith the Lord God :

I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and
will set it;

I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one,
And will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent;
In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it:
And it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly
cedar;

And under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing ;
In the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

EZEKIEL.



A tree planted by the waters,
And that spreadeth out her roots by the river ;
And shall not see when heat cometh,
But her leaf shall be green ;
And shall not be careful in the year of drought,
Neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

JEREMIAH.

THE MOTTO.

UNDE SUFFICIAMUS AD ENARRANDAM FELICITATEM
EJUS MATRIMONII, QUOD ECCLESIA CONCILIAT, ET
CONFIRMAT OBLATIO, ET OBSIGNAT BENEDICTIO;
ANGELI RENUNCIAINT, PATER RATO HABET!

TERTULLIAN. AD UXOR. LIB II. C. IX.

(quoted in Bingham.)

I KNOW NOT HOW I CAN EXPRESS SUFFICIENTLY
THE BLESSEDNESS OF THAT MARRIAGE WHICH THE
CHURCH CONTRACTS, WHICH THE OBLATION AT THE
ALTAR CONFIRMS, WHEREOF THE PRIESTLY BENEDI-
CTION IS THE SIGN AND SEAL, WHICH IS AT-
TESTED BY ANGELS, WHICH IS FIXED AND RATIFIED
BY THE FATHER OF ALL.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Prayer Book is the true manual of a Christian man in all conditions and stages of life. It provides for the morning and evening worship of God and instruction of the people, daily throughout the year; for the acknowledgment of God's abiding protection and government of this our nation, of His building up of the Church by the Apostles and saints upon the foundation of the crucified and risen Saviour, of His institution of the sabbath wherein we may enter into rest and communion with Himself; for the arranging of all these in a wonderful order, that so, witnessing for Him who is the Lord of order and harmony, and who ruleth all things by law,¹ giving the 'sun

¹ Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her

for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night,' they may further His purpose of knitting together His elect in one communion and fellowship; and lastly for the sanctifying of every condition of our earthly existence from the cradle to the grave—bringing us to the arms of Divine Love in helpless infancy, training us up in wayward childhood, strengthening us in youth to enlist under the banner of the cross and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, consecrating each new home and making it overflow with blessings, visiting the sick and dying, and bearing witness to them that among them too is the Lord of life present, and at the burial of the dead proclaiming that this awful gloom does but hide for a moment the final triumph of the same Lord, who is the Resurrection and the Life, and in whom whosoever believeth shall never die.¹

power : both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.' Hooker, Ecc. Pol. I. xvi. [8.]

¹ See note A at the end.

The harmony and proportion which exist in the different services of the Church—each with all, the occasional with the ordinary—are well worthy of note. It is apparent that the occasional services are all formed upon the groundwork of what may perhaps not improperly be called the lesser litany,¹ and which is itself incorporated into the daily services immediately after the Belief; and it is by an exquisite expansion and adaptation of this that the fullest variety of prayer and praise, of instruction and benediction, which suit the several occasions, is combined with perfect unity. Or more truly might it be said that all this variety grows out of the central unity of our Prayer Book, as the living branches and foliage of a great and living tree. And while I must leave the farther consideration of

¹ The portion of the daily service which I mean—from the Belief to the end—is more accurately said to consist of the lesser litany, the prayers, and the collects: but as what we commonly call the litany has parts corresponding to all these, I have ventured for the more shortly expressing my meaning, to enlarge a term which it appears was not very strictly limited. See Palmer's *Origines Liturg.* I. 239, 266.

this general harmony to my reader, only assuring him that the deepest and oftenest renewed meditation thereon will not be thrown away, but that it will open within him a fountain of life and beauty, ever pouring forth new and more abundant waters, I would crave his permission to pause a moment to notice how fitting is this image of a tree to the particular service—of holy Matrimony—which we have here to do with.

Reader! Hast thou drunk of the love of God's creation which abounds in the poetic writings of the inspired Hebrews, and caught something of the feeling with which they speak of trees in particular, and then, seeking thy native fields, learnt a lesson of the meaning of harmony, and unity, and life, by meditating upon some old oak or elm, such as stand age by age like guardian angels round many an English home—hast thou looked on 'those beauteous forms' till it was given thee to enter into

‘ that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.'

Perhaps thou knowest such a tree, which, planted by thine own forefathers, has remained while their generations have passed away like its leaves and left to it the possession of the inheritance in which they did but sojourn for a little time;¹ which silently witnessed thine own sports in childhood, and with a presence and a power more mighty than any sound of

1 ' —————— Here daily do we sit,
Thanks given to God for daily bread, and here
Pondering the mischiefs of these restless times,
And thinking of my Brethren, dead, dispersed,
Or changed and changing, I not seldom gaze
Upon this solemn Company unmoved
By shock of circumstances, or lapse of years,
Until I cannot but believe that they—
They are in truth the Substance, we the Shadows.'

Wordsworth, Lines on a Portrait.

words told thee in the midst of those sports of mysteries deeper than its own roots, higher than its head, and more lasting than its life ; and which reminds thee, as often as thou returnest to its shade in spirit or in bodily presence, of those who in planting it took thought for thee before thou wast born, and of those for whom thou in like manner must leave the works of thy care and foresight, if thou wouldest be God's servant and be worthy to bear the name of a man.

And now look if this Marriage service be not such a tree. Twelve hundred years has it been growing in English ground from the time it was planted by Augustine and his companions ;¹ there was a homely English vigour in

¹ The Anglo-Saxon Liturgies, of which those of Salisbury and York were the chief, are modifications of the Sacramentary of Gregory, which was brought in by Augustine and his companions at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries. In the times between then and that of Edward VI. the several bishops made such variations in the several 'Uses' as they saw fit, and thus there was full liberty for the complete development of each part until the due season came for reuniting them all into one perfect whole—the very flower and fruit of all—that from thenceforth the whole Realm

the growth of its great limbs;¹ and since it attained its perfect proportions and stature² it stands uninjured by the lightning and the storms which still pass over it, and spreads its ample shelter over all the families of our land. Here was the abode of thy parents and thy parents' parents; here was it that they found the bonds of an earthly union sanctified and transfigured into the pledges and the means of eternal life to them and to their children; here wast thou brought up on holy ground, and among holy influences which were ever comprehending thee though thou tookest no thought of them; here thou art even now thyself pitching thy tent, under a tree whose leaf shall not fade nor its fruit be consumed—whose fruit is for meat and its leaf for medicine.

And as of its history and symbolical signifi-

might have but one Use, as the preface to the Prayer Book says. Palmer, Orig. Liturg. I. 186.

¹ The Marriage service chiefly follows the Manuals of Salisbury and York, of which the exhortations and vows were in English—and good hearty English it is—while the prayers were in Latin. Palmer, Orig. Liturg. II. 208.

² In our present Prayer Book.

cance, so of the structure of this service does this image of a tree afford the best illustration. In most of the beautiful works of man—say a Grecian vase or temple—all the parts have a definite correspondence and proportion to each other, so that you can explain of any one of them why it and no other must be in the exact place it holds, and your mind completely grasps and comprehends the harmonious and beautiful work; but in the harmony and beauty of a tree there is something of the infinite, something which the mind cannot grasp, but which it admires with ever fresh wonder and delight. You cannot say why this great limb should spring from the trunk before the others, or why those should branch out into more numerous or more varied boughs, or why there should not be as much beauty and strength if there were more or fewer branches in the whole, or by what measure the countless myriads of leaves have been lavished upon it. All you know is that it stands in perfect beauty and majesty; that the more minutely you examine each part, even to the structure of *the smallest leaf*, the more proofs do you find

that every part is completely organized according to a law, and quickened by a life working in obedience to that law, so that each part is in itself a perfect whole; and that the more you open your mind to receive its entire impression the more you feel and see that there is a harmony in all this variety, a unity which holds together all the parts, and makes out of them a still more perfect, organized, living whole. And just thus must we contemplate this service of holy Matrimony if we would hope really to enter into its spirit. We cannot tell why all the several parts should be exactly where they are, why the place of this and that collect or exhortation might not have been a little altered, or why at different times some such alterations have actually been made; but we may examine every such portion, nay, every sentence and even word, and we shall find at every fresh examination new marks of truth and beauty and perfect adaptation to the subject, and so by degrees ascending to the apprehension of the meaning of the whole service, we shall, I am well assured, find that it too exhibits something of the infinite, and bears

no doubtful signs of the hand of Him who is not less the Lord and Giver of Life in the ordinances of His Church than in the works of creation. To point out some of these beauties for the sake of their practical truth and importance, and so to induce others to seek for more of the same treasure for themselves, is what I propose in the following pages.

II.

OF THE PUBLICATION OF BANNS.

It is true, that 'the interest which the state has in the appropriation of one woman to one man, and the civil obligations therefrom resulting, form an altogether distinct consideration' from that of the 'great mystery' of Christian marriage. But though distinct not separate : for while on the one hand the Church was the very root and sap from which and by which this English nation had its first beginning, so on the other hand the ministers of the Church have from the first been recognized by the state as an incorporated and organic part of itself, *and intrusted*, like the several other institu-

tions of the country, with the discharge of specific national and civil functions. Recognized and employed, I say, by the state, and not merely by this or that individual king or legislator, for no national institutions, at least in England, have been so made by mortal hands, nor could have lasted if they had been. That which makes a *Nation* out of wild and barbarous tribes, is its having given to it a heart like that of a man (as the Prophet Daniel says), and where this heart is, there is a progressive growth and development of the nation in conformity with the laws of reason and righteousness. The good and the wise of each following age seek diligently to understand what the real manner of that growth is, and what things may encourage or do harm to it, and they labour to foster and to protect it accordingly, while the bad distort and mar its growth by their passions and their ignorance : but if the latter have not destroyed it, neither have the former created it, as indeed they themselves have always borne witness ; their hearts have been but the several pulses of its heart ; their wisdom the several and success-

sive expressions of its mind, and this mind of the nation itself the reflex of the mind of God. And since this heart and mind of our nation have thus gradually organized and adapted our institutions—not to meet any theory of individuals but—to provide for the practical wants of the times, it has occurred that the men, or bodies of men, who discharge the duties of each institution have a direct self-interest in those duties over and above their interest in the well-being of the whole nation. Thus it has come about that while all are really benefitted by the existence of law and order, the maintenance of these is in the hands of those who from the possession of property have a direct interest in orderly government, independently of the common good; so the regulation of taxes, and consequently of commerce, is in the hands of those who live by trade, and who consequently will for their own sakes regulate them to the best of their ability; so lastly the offices of solemnizing marriage, educating the people, and publicly acknowledging God as the Lord and King of the nation, are most fitly *devolved on the clergy of the Church*, who by

their Christian faith and Catholic orders are already pledged, by the most binding of all sanctions, to fulfil the same duties even if the state required them not. Hence our laws look on the solemnization of marriage by a minister of the Church as the proper constitutional method, which needs no addition to make it effectual for all civil purposes, and without which they will recognize no marriage except by way of toleration and under special civil control and oversight;¹ and the Church, feeling no contradiction in its two-fold character, does upon this, as on other occasions, require that persons coming to be married should be under no impediment from the *laws of this realm*, no less than from the law of God.

Yet in this, as in all other things, it has

¹ The dissenters' chapel must be registered, and the registrar must be present to witness and register the marriage, or it will not be valid in law. The parish church and priest need no such adjuncts: nor is this difference destroyed by the restrictions of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, though they tell a humiliating tale of the condition into which the Church sunk in the last century, for lack of spiritual life and ecclesiastical discipline.

been hard to keep the due proportion and harmony; and we know that even now we are only struggling to emerge out of that long period of coldness and materialism during which the Church has been almost exclusively thought of as an estate of the realm, and classed among other national corporations and institutions, while its far higher character, as the sacramental body which is the channel of divine life to us all in every personal and social condition, and the means by which we enter into communion with God in Christ, has been well nigh forgotten. Hence we are even now only gradually realizing the latter meaning and import of this Marriage service, and if the practice has nearly ceased (as I believe it has) of reading only just as much as was necessary to make the marriage legal, there is still a very general notion that at least the rules for the **Publication of Banns** are mere legal forms, which may most properly be replaced by the equally legal licence. But a little consideration of the solemn and peremptory language of the rubric, and of the historical fact that *this public proclamation* (as the word signifies)

is, as far as is known, as old as Christianity itself,¹ shows us that it is not so. Read the *Preface* (to which we are coming immediately), and then ask yourself whether it is not more dignified, more agreeable to this ‘honourable estate,’ more suitable to a union entered on by Christian persons in the sight and fear of God, that it should be thus avowed openly ‘in the face of the congregation,’ than huddled up under cover of a licence, which, as its very name imports, is only fitting on special emergencies. I believe that before long the growing reverence for marriage as an ordinance of the Church will make marriages by licence almost as rare as those by special licence in private houses. And truly the decay of this latter practice is no small blessing, no unimportant token of the favour of God to this country when we least deserved it. How social demoralization and degradation were fostered by it during the last century we may see vividly portrayed in the writings of one of the great moralists of that day² who doubtless

¹ Wheatly on the Book of Common Prayer, chap. X. i. 1.

² Richardson. See his *Sir Charles Grandison*. The tone of

did good service against the vices he so steadfastly and religiously combatted: how all thoughts and feelings regarding marriage are purified, ennobled, hallowed by its celebration in the house of God—where we were first received into the fold of Christ, where we still come to worship and enter into communion with our Heavenly Father and to learn His will, where we trust that it will one day be declared of us that we have entered into our heavenly rest—may be proved indeed to the understanding by showing that our imagination is just as real, and demands to be as much addressed, as any other faculty of the mind, but may be most effectually learnt by listening in silence to the voice of our own hearts.

III.

THE PREFACE, OR GENERAL EXHORTATION.

Here we have proof of that perfect structure of the parts of this service:—every sentence,

the whole book may be said to have its key note in the passages arguing for marriages in church and against ‘chamber marriages,’ Vol. IV, letter xiv. Vol. VI, letter xliv.

every word, sparkles with light and life, as will be clear if we examine a few of them. **Bearly beloved**, at once tells us of that love which is the bond of the Church with its Head and of its members with each other, and connects this service with those more familiar ones in which the minister addresses us by the like title: *in the sight of God and in the face of this congregation*, declares the solemnity of our proceeding, and what need there is that it should be able to bear the full light of day, not only in the making, but also in the keeping, of the covenant, seeing that such are its witnesses: **Holy Matrimony**, reminds us that 'the bond of wedlock hath been always more or less esteemed of as a thing religious and sacred; the title which the very heathens themselves do thereunto oftentimes give is *holy*; those rites and orders which were instituted in the solemnization of marriage, the Hebrews term by the name of conjugal *Sanctifications*.'¹ Marriage is called an **Estate** (and the name is repeated again and

¹ Hooker, Ecc. Pol. V. 73. [3.]

again with an emphasis to which we should the more take heed because the word is almost in disuse through our forgetfulness of its highest meanings) to set forth that it is a constituted, organic, incorporate union in which man and woman become really and spiritually one, and no longer two individuals: and this is confirmed by reference to God's words at its original institution, and to that *mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church* of which it is the type. And there seems to be a still farther force in those words *It was instituted in the time of man's innocency*. Milton gives outward form and place to his ideal of human life by embodying it in an image of Adam and Eve in Paradise, because that was 'the time of man's innocency,' when the ideal beauty and glory of this earthly existence were not yet marred by sin nor faded by reason of their own transitoriness: and so marriage still brings to each of us an earthly Paradise with its ideal joys and hopes, its sunshine and flowers, and its thoughts and feelings

— drawn
'From May-time and the cheerful dawn.'

and the glory which was round this earth in our childhood once more returns to gladden our hearts.¹ But while the Church thus sanctions these dreams of earthly bliss, and recognizes the season of imagination and romance as having its fit time in which it is not abhorrent from her own life and kingdom of eternal reality, she yet remembers that they have but a shadowy and transient being, offering us no abiding rest, but soon necessarily to give place to the wintry clouds and storms of the world;² and therefore she hastens to tell of the sub-

¹ My Beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my Love, my fair one, and come away.
For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone ;
The flowers appear on the earth ;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell.
Arise, my Love, my fair one, and come away.

Song of Songs, ii, 10—13.

² So Shakspeare—ever faithful to the truth of things—makes Romeo and Juliet find the perfect ideal of human life in wedlock ; but an ideal which cannot but fade and pass away as soon as it has appeared.

stance which casts these shadows, the original of which they are the fading though fair copies — even the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church—that so all Married Persons, holding fast to that as the pillar and ground of their own union, may find it unshaken amidst all the changes and trials under which mere human ties must soon give way. That it is an honourable and holy Estate is farther shown by the commendation of Saint Paul, and the higher and more marked commendation of our Lord when He adorned and beautified it with His presence and first miracle that He wrought in Cana of Galilee. And seeing that it is thus honorable, the Church proceeds with glowing eloquence to warn us that it therefore is not by any to be enterprises, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. But here it may be asked, how can that be taken in hand 'discreetly' and 'advisedly' of which *the noblest foundation* and beginning are

described, alike by poets and philosophers, as a passion 'at first sight,'¹ as 'a momentary act of volition,'² as such that 'that kind of love which is the perfectest ground of wedlock is seldom able to yield any reason of itself.'³ One of these hints at the answer when he says, 'that moment may have been prepared by previous esteem, admiration, or even affection:' and still more clearly when he elsewhere exclaims, 'Do you in good earnest aim at dignity of character? By all the treasures of a peaceful mind, by all the charms of an open countenance, I conjure you, O youth! turn away from those who live in the twilight of vice and virtue. Are not reason, discrimination, law, and deliberate choice, the distinguishing characters of humanity? Can ought then worthy of a human being proceed from a habit of soul, which would exclude all these and (to borrow a metaphor from Paganism) prefer the den of Trophonius to the temple and oracles of the God of light? Can anything manly, I say, proceed from those who for

¹ Shakspeare. ² Coleridge. ³ Hooker.

law and light would substitute shapeless feelings, sentiments, impulses, which as far as they differ from the vital workings in the brute animals owe their difference to their former connexion with the proper virtues of humanity : as dendrites derive the outlines, that constitute their value above other clay-stones, from the casual neighbourhood and pressure of the plants, the names of which they assume ? Remember, that love itself in its highest earthly bearing, as the ground of the marriage union, becomes love by an inward fiat of the will, by a completing and sealing act of moral election, and lays claim to permanence only under the form of duty.¹ Every one who has studied the operations of his own mind, knows that in all the higher and more important determinations of his will there is so much of likeness to the image of his Maker that he can—nay must—in some degree say ‘ It shall be, and it is good that it be, *because I will it.*’ And though only in as far as that will has been previously trained

¹ *Aids to Reflection*, p. 28.

and disciplined in habits of temperance, and reason, and conformity to a Higher Will, is it possible that its determination and choice at any particular moment should be good instead of utterly bad;¹ yet, having been so

¹ I quote the following passage in illustration of what I have, I fear very obscurely, here said of the will: the connection may not be obvious, but the thoughtful reader will find it real, and important. ‘We make prayer the utterance of the will and the reason of man. We consider it their highest and most perfect utterance; that in which, and in which alone, they fully realize themselves. What the human will is we can understand from no terms and definitions of logic. They can only express one half of its meaning, for they can only describe it by its intrinsic properties; whereas its essential characteristic is, that it is ever going out of itself. They can only describe it at rest; whereas it only *is* while it acts. But in prayer we can know truly and safely what the will is; prayer expounds to us its immost nature; prayer substantiates it, and proves that to be the greatest reality which seems in language to be the greatest contradiction. The will gives itself up that it may be itself. It dies that it may enjoy life. In acknowledging another will as the only will, it attains its own freedom; even as in trying to have a being of its own, it becomes a slave. ‘Father not my will but thine.’ When do we behold the human will in such perfection, in such distinctness of life and power as in these awful words? And it is the same with that organ which beholds as with that which determines, with that which is the

trained, its intuitive decisions prove wise and rational on matters, which, because they are so weighty, the understanding would vainly try to measure and judge of. And hence we may be sure (and daily experience bears witness of the fact) that those whose hearts are purified and elevated by such a reverent and religious contemplation of the duties and dignity of marriage as the Church here commends, will not, and do not, in that final and 'momentary act of volition', fix their choice upon any base and unworthy object. They prove that their love *is* reason, though it may be unable to give any.¹

The Church next proceeds to explain the nature of this Christian discretion, by setting forth the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.

The *first* of these is, that so children may

seat of wisdom, as with that which is the source of action. This only knows itself when it forgets itself; this only sees while the sense of sight is lost in the object of it. Accordingly the reason also finds its deepest meaning and expression in worship.' Maurice's Kingdom of Christ, Vol. II. pp. 35, 36. 2nd Edit.

See note B at the end.

both be born, and brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of His holy Name.

The perfection of being—from the highest to the lowest—is the production of its like, the living again in another self. The plant which naturally perishes as soon as it has ripened the seeds by which it is to reproduce itself next spring, will, if it be prevented from flowering, live on beyond its appointed term by the inward force of this fundamental law of its existence. We trace the same law working through all animated nature: in man's deep longing for offspring, in the mother's love to her infant, we see it manifested in its highest finite operation; while the Church leads us into that holy of holies where in silent adoration we may behold the very ground of that law, in the ineffable mystery of the Holy Trinity—the Father abiding in eternal communion with the only begotten Son in the unity of the Spirit. If we will really understand how solemn and yet how joyful a thing it is to be a parent, to have a son, we must see it in the light of this ' beatific Vision,' to which we are admitted.

through faith in the only-begotten Son of the Father ; and thus looking at it we shall perceive clearly how the birth and bringing up of children produces such important practical results in their parents as we constantly see to be the case. The facts are every-where before us, and though we are always overlooking them because they are so common, yet if we will pause and reflect on them, their meaning soon becomes plain. In their children the parents find an escape from that self which haunts each of us like an evil spirit, and learn how to purify and transform into duty that self-interest, which, however lawful and even necessary to every individual, is continually sinking into selfishness, if it be not upheld by some nobler virtue than itself. In their children they find new motives to self-control and self-denial, lest they should by any bad example injure those who are dearer to them than themselves ; and so we constantly see the dying embers of faith and hope, which had long seemed quenched in a man's heart by the cares or pleasures of the world, reviving under the power of love and *duty, and he* who had become reckless for

himself, learns to live as a man and a Christian for the sake of his children. Then spring up the ideas of social relationships and order, as things which we do not make, but which are every-where about us, and ready to do us service if we will use them, provided for that end by God, and types of that abiding and divine kingdom which is in heaven: then do our children lead us towards the true apprehension of eternal life, while we see it shadowed forth to us in the perpetuation of our name and character upon earth by them after we are dead. And while these are the benefits to the parents, we are to consider on the other hand, that upon the birth of children depends (as Hooker says) 'first the replenishing of the earth with blessed inhabitants, and then of heaven with saints everlastingly praising God.'¹ And if

¹ So the Homily on the State of Matrimony. 'Furthermore it is also ordained, that the Church of God and his kingdom might by this kind of life be conserved and enlarged; not only in that God giveth children by His blessing, but also in that they be brought up by the parents godly, in the knowledge of God's Word; that thus the knowledge of God and true religion might be delivered by succession from one to another, that finally many might enjoy that everlasting immortality.'

men coupled this recollection of the immortal worth of the beings whom they bring into the world, and to the bringing up of whom they thus solemnly pledge themselves, with the thought—witnessed to alike by Scripture and experience—that their children are begotten in their own image ; if they considered that whatever their own habitual character is, either good or bad, such must they expect to be the disposition with which their children are born ; that the sins which they permit in themselves will re-appear as hereditary moral diseases in their children ; and that virtues of a Christian life which they have only acquired by many conflicts of faith and patience, will, by God's blessing, become in their children as natural and constitutional beauties and graces, like the seeds of some hot-house flower springing up in the open air of a southern climate ;—if they duly thought of these things, how earnestly would they watch over and keep their own hearts, how habitually would they seek to ‘put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the *deceitful lusts*, and to be renewed in the spi

rit of their mind, and to put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

The *second* cause why marriage was ordained is the promotion of holiness.

Nature is always oscillating like a pendulum between the extreme points of its range—day and night, summer and winter, birth and death, perpetually succeed each to each in a continual round: *spirit* is always progressing from truth to truth, from glory to glory, yet so progressing that it never loses the lower as it ascends to the higher, but gathers all into one, into a unity in which there is no succession of parts, but a harmony of all present at once. How then have we erred, age after age, in trying marriage by the law of nature instead of by that of spirit: one age set up celibacy to the disparagement of wedlock, another thinks it cannot honour marriage without denouncing all those who would dedicate themselves to God by a single life,¹ and now

¹ It is worth noticing that Luther did not set the example which his Protestant successors have followed in this respect.—See his Commentary on Genesis, V. 32.

there seem to be some signs of a new oscillation and re-action, against marriage, and in favour of monastic life. The consequences of these partial views are plain in history, though from their greatness not easy to be measured. We cannot easily over-rate the witness which the monks and nuns of the middle ages bore for the reality of man's spiritual being, in a generation of wild and savage men hardly risen out of mere animal existence, when for the sake of Christ and His kingdom they were content to sacrifice even the deepest of earthly feelings and hopes: but not less widely spread than this blessing, has been the curse of an unmarried parish clergy, cut off from human sympathy with their country and with their flocks, and in some at least of the countries of Europe ceasing to be teachers of anything but the grossest vice and immorality. So, on the other hand, an impartial observer must confess that our Protestant depreciation of celibacy has produced much bad fruit along with the good: by side with our English reverence for home, and love of home, there has grown up a spirit of self-indulgence which, by weakly

substituting a premature and reckless marriage for virtuous self-denial, is constantly undermining that reverence and that love, no less than if it more boldly broke through bounds which it has not the bravery to submit to. If those who openly set at nought the law of marriage are justly condemned as vicious and profane persons, are they much better who, in no very different temper, take upon themselves the duties and responsibilities of husbands and fathers before they have either the maturely formed character, or the industriously acquired competence, which are the necessary conditions of their fulfilling those duties? We need not I think go to the cellars of Liverpool or Manchester, in which myriads of families are born and die in a state morally and physically far worse than that of beasts, for the facts which give an answer to this question: these *homes*, these *husbands*, *wives*, and *children*, do not more clearly—though more obviously and coarsely—tell us what marriage may become, even in a Christian land, than many a household and its inmates who maintain some respectable show before the world.

yet endure, without hope of remedy, the curse which awaits every marriage entered upon in self-will, and for self-indulgence, and not ' soberly and in the fear of God.'

But if we thus err, the Church, with her spiritual discernment, does not take any one of these partial views, but sees and sets forth the whole truth. She follows the guidance of her Lord and the authority of His Word, and here recognizes **Continency** as the gift of God, while she is proclaiming the opposite—but not contrary—truth, that true holiness, undefiled membership in the body of Christ, may be sought and found in wedlock. But we must take heed that we do not pervert these words, as they often are perverted by the advocates of both the opposite views I have just spoken of, nor falsely understand them as a licence to mere animal indulgence, so that it be legalized by the limitations of marriage. Not so: it is a remedy against sin—not a limited sanction of it—that the Church offers to those who worthily enter into wedlock, and an actual means of abiding with Christ and with each other, as undefiled Members of His Body, in

that highest communion of which the Holy Ghost Himself is the only bond and minister. Christian marriage is to raise us out of mere animal life, to infuse into our bodies as well as souls the new life of Christ, and to make the outward and earthly forms and workings of nature, not merely types but sacramental pledges that husband and wife are united in Christ, and means by which that divine union is made effectual. This is the truth which the Romish churches seek to signify in calling marriage a sacrament: a truth which sometimes seems to me to have been hardly more set at nought by their notion that celibacy secures a higher purity in the priesthood, than by that criticism which has wrested the plainest assertions of the Gospel narrative in order to deny that Mary lived with Joseph as his wedded wife and was the mother of his children. Alas for the unhealthy, unchristian habit of mind which would rob the holy, humble, selfless mother of our Lord, of all the true purity of a woman and a wife, in order to adorn her with the spurious artificial purity of superstition and self-righteousness. The image of St. Mary—the work

of men's hands—is set up to be blackened with the soot and smoke of idolatrous incense : but she herself is thrust down from her rightful place as the pattern and mirror of all godly women. That this is her rightful place I shall endeavour to show anon.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

Thus the Church describes Love, which is the union of two wills, as friendship is the agreement of two minds. The fittest comment I can give upon these words of the service is Coleridge's explanation of what true love is, only observing that all he says proves that it *need* not be so rare, as he rightly asserts that it is : for its features all belong to our common humanity, and could only be defaced by our own selfishness. 'Love, truly such, is itself not the most common thing in the world ; and mutual love still less so...That enduring personal attachment..... in addition to a depth and constancy of character of no every-day occurrence, supposes a peculiar sensibility and

tenderness of nature; a constitutional communicativeness and utterancy of heart and soul; a delight in the detail of sympathy, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within—to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love. But above all, it supposes a soul which, even in the pride and summer-tide of life—even in the lustihood of health and strength, had felt oftenest and prized highest that which age cannot take away, and which, in all our lovings, is *the Love*;—I mean that willing sense of the unsufficingness of the self for itself, which predisposes a generous nature to see, in the total being of another, the supplement and completion of its own;—that quiet perpetual seeking which the presence of the beloved object modulates, not suspends, where the heart momently finds, and, finding, again seeks on;—lastly, when ‘life’s changeful orb has passed the full,’ a confirmed faith in the nobleness of humanity, thus brought home and pressed, as it were, to the very bosom of hourly experience; it supposes, I say, a heartfelt reverence for worth, not the less deep because divested of its solemnity by

habit, by familiarity, by mutual infirmities, and even by a feeling of modesty which will arise in delicate minds, when they are conscious of possessing the same or the correspondent excellence in their own characters. In short, there must be a mind, which, while it feels the beautiful and the excellent in the beloved as its own, and by right of love appropriates it, can call Goodness its playfellow; and dares make sport of time and infirmity, while in the person of a thousand-foldly endeared partner, we feel for aged virtue the caressing fondness that belongs to the innocence of childhood, and repeat the same attentions and tender courtesies which had been dictated by the same affection to the same object when attired in feminine loveliness or in manly beauty.'¹

' We'll live together, like two neighbour vines,
Circling our souls and loves in one another !
We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit ;
One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn ;
One age go with us, and one hour of death
Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.'

¹ Coleridge's Poetical Works, Vol. II. pp. 120, 121. The line (from Beaumont and Fletcher) are from page 118 of the same. Let me put by their side these from King John—

' If not complete, oh say, he is not she ;

But while this, the philosophical, no less than poetical, idea of love, is plainly involved in the words of the Church, we must not overlook their eminently practical tone, which, telling of help, comfort, adversity, no less than of mutual society, and prosperity, reminds us that this world is the place for work chiefly, and only of enjoyment as a cordial to cheer us on to more unremitting labours. Work—not for ourselves merely, for that will be as selfish and worthless as lazy ease, but—for the sake of others, is the proper calling of every man, whatever be his station or his character. And he who by not working puts himself beyond the need of a wife's sympathy 'to comfort him concerning the work and toil of his hands,' inevitably precludes himself from the enjoyment of the higher forms of woman's affection, while at the same time he is no less incapable

And she again wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be not, that she is not he :
He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such a she ;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.'

of giving than receiving the blessings of true love. The Cavalier Lovelace, 'on going to the wars,' says to his mistress,

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Lov'd I not honour more :

and if we make the soldier's sentiment of universal application, by changing 'honour' to 'duty,' we shall have an unerring light to show us the way to happiness in marriage. The man who does not work—who has no duty—may perhaps attain to such joys as there are in indolence,¹ but any real bliss in life he cannot know. If it be true that 'none love their country, but who love their home,' it is no less certain that he who has not learnt what it is to have a country cannot have a home.

After noting the solemn and awful charge to the persons about to be married, that they confess if there be any impediment to their lawful union; and the like appeal to the congregation, coupled with the admonition that they speak now, or else hereafter for ever hold their peace, since the bond of wedlock is too

¹ *Indolentia*, absence of pain.

sacred to be meddled with by the light tongues of censorious bystanders ;—we pass to

IV.

THE ESPOUSALS.

Animals are but sentient *things*, carried along the stream of their life by the unresisted and irresistible current of nature : men and women are *persons*, having power to say, I choose, I will, and responsible for choosing the good and refusing the evil. It is this personality and responsibility that make Marriage possible, and the Church throughout assumes these as its necessary conditions—or rather I should say, asserts them, for it would be impossible to make more direct appeals to the conscience and will, or to require more express declarations and engagements from them, than we find here at every step of our way. It has been thus as far as we have yet gone, and now becomes still more strikingly so.

‘ The solemnization of matrimony being a formal compact, it is requisite in the first place, that the *mutual consent* of the parties be

asked, which is so essentially necessary, that the marriage is not good without it. And therefore we find that Rebekah's friends asked her consent before they sent her away to Isaac. And in the firmest kind of marriage among the Romans, which they called *coemption*, the parties mutually asked this of each other. This therefore, being so momentous a custom, is for that reason taken into the Christian offices : only among Christians the question is proposed by the priest, that so the declaration may be the more solemn, as being made in the immediate presence of God, and to His deputed minister. The man therefore is asked, *Whether he will have this woman to his wedded wife ?* and the woman, *Whether she will have this man to be her wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony ?* And that they may the better know what are the conditions of this state, the minister enumerates the duties which each of them by this covenant will be bound to perform.¹ And he speaks to each separately, and requires of each the separate

¹ Wheatly, X. iv. 1.

answer, ~~I will~~, that each may know and feel that it is his or her own undivided act and responsibility.

The author from whom I have just quoted goes on to say, that this solemn declaration of the parties' consent seems to be the remains of the old form of *Espousals*, which was different and distinct from the office of *Marriage*: it was often performed a considerable time before, but still ordered by the Church to be made in the presence of a minister, who should use suitable prayers and blessings, and was not to be left as a private agreement or mere civil contract. But it being found that these engagements were often broken when the marriage was thus deferred, it was decreed that the espousals and marriage should both be performed on the same day, and thus the two came to be united in one service.¹

As the engagements here correspond in purport with those which afterwards follow, I shall consider the details of both together.

¹ Wheatly, X. iv. 5.

V.

THE COVENANT PRESCRIBED BY GOD.

In England, as in every nation which, by possessing a constitution, deserves the name of a nation, the Queen ever acts by advice—whether of her Privy Council or of the great council of Parliament—and so acting, her will is absolute and without appeal. This is the fundamental distinction between a lawful monarchy and a despotism or tyranny, that the latter is the government of mere will, the former of will and reason united. So the inspired Apostle, in those passages in which he seems to pour out his whole soul in the endeavour to declare the glories of the Divine Majesty, always exhibits that King whom he proclaims, as ‘Him who worketh all things according to the *Counsel* of His own will,’ and ‘Who abounds in wisdom and prudence’ no less than in ‘dominion and power.’ If we forget this essential characteristic of God’s *government*, we cannot understand the least of

His ways even in nature, much less His meaning and design in so great an institution as that of marriage. The part of the service we are now come to is that in which the Church, as God's minister, dictates to the man and woman the terms of a covenant to which they irrevocably bind themselves, and which they are solemnly assured will be enforced by God as their Judge and King : every thing is prescribed, the authority is absolute, nothing is left to the choice or arrangement of the parties themselves : they are come into the presence of a Sovereign whose will is law, and a law which He will execute against all who break it. All married persons, all who contemplate marriage, feel the sternness of this law, but to some that very sternness is the strength of life and liberty, while to others it is an intolerable yoke of bondage : for duty is ever a rock ; but while to one it is the immovable foundation of a house, against which neither winds nor waves can prevail, and within which are plenty and peace and all the joys of home ; to another it is a bleak and barren precipice, on which—Prometheus-like—he is chained

44 THE COVENANT PRESCRIBED BY GOD.

without prospect but that of the returning vulture. And the origin of the difference is this ; that to the one this law is a mere power which he cannot resist or evade, while the other enters into its meaning, and knows and feels that it is the expression of perfect wisdom and goodness, and is called for by the very constitution of things.

In order then to understand the fitness of the covenant and bond prescribed, we must look at the essential characteristics of the two sexes, and of that order of society which is maintained by the due performance of their respective functions, each doing its own work, each supplying that which the other cannot do. Every theoretical absurdity about the rights of woman, every practical evil of selfishness or brutishness in men towards their wives, may be plainly traced to the want of faith in the fact of such a distinction and mutual relationship. But let not my readers think that therefore I propose that they too should have their theory upon the subject : not so, but only let them take for granted that the *Church has been truly taught and guided in*

the framing of this ordinance, and then try to discover and understand the truth embodied in it, but not to invent anything, however ingenious, to put in its stead. It would not be difficult to show how the Church has here brought light and order into the chaos of the notions and practices of all times and ages, about the relations of man and woman ; how she has separated the gold from the dross, in the laws of ancient Rome, or the customs of our Saxon ancestors, and by the warmth of the sun of the Gospel fostered into vigorous growth the half-developed germs of Jewish institutions : but, leaving the rest for the reader's own consideration, I will only point out, that it is to the Christian Church that women owe the distinct recognition of their equal personality with men. Women obtained great dignity and reverence, both in ancient Rome, and among the chosen nation of Israel, but still it was as mothers and as wives, not as women :—their relationships, not their own personal life, were the source of that dignity and reverence. There might be exceptions, but they were exceptions and not

instances. It was by the miraculous conception and birth of our Lord, that the fact of woman's personality was first adequately realized and expressed. The Son of Man, He who was eminently the Man, the Head of all men, upon the reality of whose humanity depended the reality—nay possibility—of man's redemption and admission to fellowship with God, was born of the Virgin Mary, and from her alone was that humanity derived: by which her own *personality*, and that of all her sex, was plainly declared. The Church seems to point to this in her use of the Song of Mary in the daily prayers: certainly this recognition of woman's personality, and its connexion with the Virgin on the one hand, and with the Church herself—the redeemed humanity—on the other, are most striking features in the history of the Church. If any one ask for an instance, I will refer him not to any Romish writer, but to Luther's sermon on the Nativity. For I look on this sermon as an historical document, because the mind and belief of the best and mightiest man of any age *certainly* concentrate and reflect the proper

light and life of that age—he clearly expresses in words and deeds what his fellow men have indeed working in their hearts, but which needs to be explained even to themselves by the mouth of a prophet: and such a prophet, such a teacher of his age, and so of the Church in all ages, was Luther. He says, ' This is our title which we have received from Adam ; in this one thing we may glory, and in nothing else ; namely, that every infant that is born into this world is wholly in the power of sin, death, Satan, hell, and eternal damnation ; our nativity is altogether miserable, and on every side to be lamented. To deliver us from this nativity, God sent another nativity, which it behoved to be pure and without spot, that it might make this unclean and sinful nativity pure. This is that nativity of the Lord Christ, His only begotten Son. Wherefore He would not have Him born of flesh and blood, infected with sin ; but it behoved that He should be born of a pure virgin. He suffered no spot at all nor sin in His flesh, but replenished it with the Holy Ghost.....If a man did believe that this nativity was for his own advantage, he

would fear neither sin nor death. Wherefore I have said, that a Christian must believe and doubt nothing that the nativity of Christ is as well his as it is the Lord Christ's; and as He hath of the Virgin pure blood and flesh, so that he himself is also pure; and that this Virgin is his mother spiritually, as she was the mother of Christ carnally. Let the heart have sure confidence in this persuasion, otherwise it will be in an evil case. This the angel signifieth in these words, when he saith, Unto you is He born, as if he had said, Whatsoever He is and hath, ye may challenge it to yourselves.....Now, forasmuch as He is mine, and hath changed His nativity into mine, His flesh and blood also is mine, He himself is mine, with all wherewith He is endued, so that I dare say unto His mother, Behold that child which thou hast brought forth is mine, His flesh and blood are my flesh and blood, yea, and thou art my mother, and I will be counted of thee for thy son; for whatsoever Christ bringeth with Him, it must be mine, even as He himself is mine: if so be that *His* nativity is mine, being of a vir-

gin, and without sin replenished with the Holy Ghost, my nativity also must be of a virgin and pure from sin. Here now, Eve the first mother is no more my mother; for it must needs be that that nativity utterly die and perish, that there may be no sin remaining. Here this mother, Mary, is to be set against that mother, of whom I was born in sin. And thus the angel bringeth with him great joy, for it cannot be but that the heart should be made glad, when it enjoyeth this Saviour as its own.' Here we find Luther, in words at once homely and sturdy as a peasant's, and radiant with all the lustre of man's genius and of God's Spirit, speaking of the Virgin Mary with just that feeling and significance, which are expressed in the old Catholic name of ' Our Lady,'—considering her as the representative and pattern of womanhood, and the figure of the Church, the Jerusalem from above, which is the mother of us all. And surely there is something true and good, as well as beautiful, in that Catholic reverence for Mary as THE LADY—the ideal Woman, something which may be separated from super-

stition and idolatry, and the tearing up of which, together with such superstition, has been a real loss to Protestants. Let the reader judge whether our Church does not, as I have said, intend to uphold this reverence, and whether all that is recorded of Mary—the highly-favoured, the blessed among women—does not show a fitness in such feeling. Little, indeed, is told us of her life, but the few incidents are like the strokes of that design from the hand of Flaxman,¹ and say all that is needful to enable us to enter into her whole character, her meekness, lowliness, trustfulness, stillness, piety,—in a word, her womanliness:—nay, all that could be given in the most elaborate picture.

Let us now proceed to seek, in the details of this part of the service, for some of those marks which we expected to find of the reasonableness of the law of marriage.

VI.

THE GIVING OF THE BRIDE.

Then shall the Minister say, Who giveth

¹ *The Salutation* in the Illustrations of Dante. It is the very counterpart of the Gospel notices of the Virgin.

this Woman to be married to this Man? The new household, of which the foundation is now being laid, is not to be built on the ruins of another; the law of order to which the woman was amenable in her father's house, is not to be broken when she leaves it to be mistress of her own. It is not to be broken either by her, or by him for whose sake she leaves father and mother, for by this form the Church plainly teaches him also to beware of defiance of the will of her parents in the matter.¹

¹ Shakespeare makes irretrievable woe fall upon both Othello and Desdemona, because they had broken this law. When her father said,

Look to her, Moor ; have a quick eye to see ;
She has deceived her father, and may thee,

Othello could reply in perfect trust—and a trust which was not misplaced—‘ My life upon her faith.’ And yet the curse did not the less certainly prevail, so that when Gratiano exclaims

Poor Desdemona ! I am glad thy father’s dead ;
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain :

he beholds a sight so terrible that he adds—
did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn ;

But why should a subordination to domestic authority and order be thus required of women, while the opposite, of independence, and obedience only to his own reason and conscience, is universally acknowledged to be a chief virtue in a man? The answer must, as I have already said, be found in the very constitution of society, and the original endowment of man and woman with distinct characters in order that they may be able to fulfil distinct offices therein. We learn from geology that the several forms and changes of the infinitely diversified, yet harmonious, face of the earth, are mainly produced by the two great agents, fire and water: the former, by a series of energetic and violent efforts, raising continents from the sea and mountains from the plains; the latter—whether as the gentle rain from heaven, or the deep river with its calm and constant flow—subduing inequalities, and restoring all things to a level, by an insensible yet never interrupted action exerted upon the minute and successive details of every substance

*Yes, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.*

submitted to it. And it has been well said that in this we have an illustration of the respective functions of man and woman in the moral world. To the man it is appointed to *originate*, to the woman to *continuate*, all that belongs to that world : the man creates its forms, the woman supplies its life : the man works by self-conscious and separate acts, the woman by influences intuitively exercised ; the man can only act rightly when his way is guided by the light of Truth reflected upon his understanding, the woman feels, and turns to, the presence of Goodness by a holy instinct which is not the less elevated and elevating, because it is not acquired by a process of logic.¹ These are

¹ In Shakspeare all the elements of womanhood are holy, and there is the sweet, yet dignified, feeling of all that *continuates* society, as sense of ancestry and of sex, with a purity unassailable by sophistry, because it rests not in the analytic processes, but in that sane equipoise of the faculties, during which the feelings are representative of all past experience, not of the individual only, but of all those by whom she has been educated, and their predecessors even up to the first mother that lived. Shakspeare saw that the want of prominence, which Pope notices for sarcasm, was the blessed beauty of the woman's character, and knew that it arose not from any

the parts which we actually see all good men and women respectively filling in the world, and it is plain that the qualifications for each are not artificially acquired, though doubtless developed and perfected by education. Nor can they co-exist (at least in any high degree) in the same individual, for the strength required for the one work is not in finite creatures compatible with the delicacy and gentleness essential for the other: only in the Infinite and Absolute Being do all opposite attributes meet and display themselves. To us it is given to be members of one body, and while each performs his particular function, to co-operate

deficiency, but from the more exquisite harmony of all the parts of the moral being constituting one living total of head and heart. He has drawn it, indeed, in all its distinctive energies of faith, patience, constancy, fortitude,—shown in all of them as following the heart, which gives its results by a nice tact and happy intuition, without the intervention of the discursive faculty,—sees all things in and by the light of the affections, and errs, if it ever err, in the exaggerations of love alone. In all the Shakspearian women there is essentially the same foundation and principle; the distinct individuality and variety are merely the result of the modification of circumstances, whether in *Miranda* the maiden, in *Imogen* the wife, or in *Katharine the queen*. Coleridge's Literary Remains, Vol. II. 97.

harmoniously with all the rest: but let us beware how we attempt to confound and obliterate the order and distinction which God has established, lest we substitute the selfish love of power for the Christian devotion to duty, and so become followers of the devil, who first chose darkness and confusion and chaos for his dwelling-place, because he would reign as a god. From the inviolability of this distinction is it, that the effeminate man and the masculine woman have ever proved to be wretched and abortive imitations of characters of which they can never really possess the virtues or graces: deformed monsters which excite aversion from their ugliness, contempt for their self-conceit, and pity, that they have renounced all healthful life and action to seek happiness in the fancies of a diseased mind and heart.

It should farther be observed under this head, that the woman is given not to the man but to the minister, who then gives her to him, thus representing that he receives her for a wife from God.

VII.

THE PLIGHTING OF TROTH.

The joining of right hands has in all ages been esteemed among the strongest pledges to a covenant, and has been ever used by Heathens, Jews, and Christians, upon this occasion of wedlock.¹ The form of covenant exactly answers to that which our lawyers prescribe as necessary in a deed of conveyance, in which they say there must be four things—the *Premises*, containing the names of the persons and of the thing conveyed, the *Having and Holding*, the *Limitations*, and the *Sealing*.² ‘For, first,’ says Wheatly, ‘each party name themselves’ (in which use of the Christian baptismal name, mark the ideas of personality and responsibility necessarily implied), ‘and specifying the other as the individual person whom they have chosen, declare the end for which they take, viz. ~~to be wedded husband and wife.~~ Secondly, the manner of

¹ Wheatly, X. v. 2.

² The same, X, v. 8.

taking is expressed in those ancient words, **to have and to hold**, which are words (saith Littleton) of such importance, that no conveyance can be made without them : and therefore they ought not to be omitted here, because the man and the woman are now to put themselves into the power and possession of each other ; insomuch that after this stipulation ‘the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband ; and likewise the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.’¹ Thirdly, the time of entering upon, and the time of enjoying, the possession conveyed, is here expressly declared. It is to begin immediately from the nuptial day, and to continue during their mutual lives, **from this day forward—till death us do part.** And lest any inconveniences appearing afterwards should be alleged for the breaking this sacred contract, here is added a protestation that the obligation shall continue in full force, notwithstanding any future unexpected changes. They are to have and to hold **for better for worse,**

¹ 1 Cor. VII. 4.

in respect of their mind and manners; *for richer for poorer* in respect of their estate; and whether in sickness or in health in respect of their body. Now all these are added to prevent the scandalous liberties of divorce, which was practised upon every trifling occasion among Jews and Romans. This being so contrary to the nature of marriage, it is necessary it should be removed from all Christian societies: which cannot be more effectually done than by a particular recital at the time of marriage of all the cases which may be pretended as the causes of a future dislike.¹ The next particular is the rule by which the compact is made, viz., according to God's holy ordinance:² which may be referred to every part of the present stipulation, so as to imply that all the branches thereof are agree-

¹ 'To prevent any objection, I suppose, that might afterwards be imagined from either party's declining in their comeliness or beauty, the York Manual, that was used in the northern parts of England before the Reformation, had an addition of the words *for fairer for fouler*.' Wheatly, X. v. 3.

² The words before the Reformation were—*if holy Church i woll ordaine.* The same.

able to the Divine institution.....Lastly, here is the ratification of all the former particulars in the ancient form, ~~and thereto I plight,~~ (as the man says,) or, (as the woman,) ~~I give, thee~~ my troth, that is, for the performance of all that has been said, each of them lays their faith or truth to pledge, as much as if they had said, If I perform not the covenant I have made, let me forfeit my credit, and never be counted just, or honest, or faithful more.¹

I will not add any observations of my own, as to those vows which are the same for the man and woman, except to repeat that due regard must be had in the consideration of them to the distinctions and relations of the two sexes. And then let us pass to

VIII.

THE WOMAN'S VOW OF OBEDIENCE.

In the espousals the woman was asked, ~~Wilt thou obey him and serve him?~~ and answered, ~~I will;~~ and now she repeats the vow

¹ Wheatly, X. v. 8.

—**I take thee.....to obey.** There is plainly an emphasis in the words which calls for attention. We have seen that meekness, gentleness, delicacy, beauty, are the proper spiritual endowments of a woman; and it is not strange, that she (if such there be) who defaces these by any wilful attempts to realize vain theories about her rights, and so in fact renounces her name of a woman, and her duty to society, should shrink from this engagement, and, while she makes it with her lips, protest against it in her heart, as the invention of tyranny. But she who duly prizes these graces, and realizes the dignity and honour of belonging to the sex whose birth-right they are, and who, by habitually fulfilling the duties of a daughter, and sister, and English maiden, has become truly qualified for those of an English wife, and mother, and matron ;—she will tell you that there is nothing more agreeable to her sense of moral fitness, nothing which promises her more of liberty as well as peace and joy, than this vow of obedience to

that guide, whose light
Of manly virtues —————

Gave him first the wished-for part
In her gentle virgin heart.

This is certain : all good women have decided it with unanimous voice. Yet, because it is true, it will bear farther examination into its grounds : and such examination, if I had skill to conduct it, would not be without pleasure and profit even to those who seem to need it least, because, to them

love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.

To do this, we must enter reverently, yet boldly, into the heaven of heavens, in which the Church and the Scripture assure us, the foundations of marriage are laid. The Greek philosopher says that the original cause is the last in discovery ; and so the Church (following the authority of the inspired Apostle¹) declares that the state of holy matrimony, which was instituted by God in the time of our first parents, was by Him consecrated to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity be-

¹ Ephesians V. 22—33.

twixt Christ and his Church : though *this* marriage was only discovered in the fulness of time, yet it had been made ' before all worlds ' in the mind of God, and earthly marriage was from the first instituted by Him as its type.¹ We then who live in the times of the Gospel have the substance which casts the shadow, the original whence the copy is taken, the key to the secret, given us in the revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. O that all married persons thought more stedfastly, more habitually, on this truth ! How holy, how happy, would their wedded life be, what a blessing to their country and to themselves, if they ever took this marriage of Christ and His Church for their pattern and mirror, and ordered their daily walk and conversation by that ! How would they find these two illustrate and explain each other in the highest principles and the smallest details of each : how would they find that there was one life, one Lord and Giver of life, in both, and that while their earthly union was ever expanding itself into new

¹ See Maurice's Kingdom of Christ, Vol. I., p. 372, 2d edit.

forms of love and joy and duty, these were the proper symbols, because living parts, of that eternal life and fellowship which they have with Christ as members of His Church ! But I am to speak here of obedience. There are two kinds of obedience—obedience to laws or rules, and obedience to a person : and St. Paul's chief method of setting forth the peculiar character of the Gospel is an explanation and contrast of these. He shows the difference and the relation between the law of Moses and the Person of Jesus Christ ; between obedience to the law and obedience to Christ ; and between the righteousness which is attained to by the one and the other : and the one he calls the obedience and righteousness of works, and the other the obedience and righteousness of faith. Further, he explains faith to be TRUST IN A PERSON, namely, in Jesus Christ, as the Friend and Lord of man ; that this faith or trust, being the act of our whole being and not of some single faculty of it, begets in us a perfect union of will with the will of Him in whom we so trust, and consequently an entire conformity to, and reflection of, His character .

and that this oneness of our will with His, is a far more real obedience, and this conformity of our character to His, a far more actual righteousness, than is possible, or even conceivable, by the most diligent and laborious system of rules and works. And therefore, when the wife is told, as she is again and again in this service, that she is to understand her duties, by looking at her husband as the Church looks at her Lord, it is manifest that her vow of obedience means that she will have faith and trust in her husband, that she will give up her whole heart and will to be one with his, and that in habitual conformity of her character to his, she will seek for that 'perfect love and peace with him' which the Church encourages her to expect as her rightful portion.

But do I thus explain away this vow, and make the obedience promised therein to be no actual obedience? No, by no means. The wife is bound to keep it, and must have many occasions for keeping it, to the very letter. Just in proportion as her heart is perfectly one with the heart of her husband will her *obedience be so living* (I will not say natural

of that which is in truth spiritual, though it has the regular and steady flow of nature), that she will be unconscious of her particular acts of obedience, and only sensible of the habitual liberty and happiness which are its fruits : but forasmuch as neither she nor her husband are, nor can be, perfect,—since he will often be selfish and unreasonable, and she inclined to prefer her own will, even when his is really the better,—therefore, and as often as these things happen, will she have occasion for the conscious and literal adherence to her vow. Then must she take heed that she obey, because her duty, though not her inclination, nor even her judgment, commands her so to do ; and she must, by specific acts of obedience to specific requirements of her husband, subject inclination to duty : and then will she feel the worth of her vows, not because they prevent her from going wrong, but because they help her, as nothing else could do, in going right. For it is the vows, the formal, irrevocable bond, which give to the union of husband and wife the only strength which is sufficient to resist the wear and strain to which the

trials of this life subject it: neither faith nor love could do this work, but would again and again give way, were they never so true and pure. They, indeed, are most necessary to give life and beauty to forms, which, without them, will be dreary and barren; but forms are the only fast-holding root of that tree of wedlock of which they are the leaves, and flowers, and fruit.¹

There are some women—who has not seen such—who try to substitute affection for obedience. Too good not to love their husbands, yet too proud to obey, they would make love instead of faith the pillar of their married life and estate. And it is said that the attempt so far succeeds as to supply a plausible excuse for its imitation for those who are inclined to follow such an example. I should rather expect to find that the results were not unlike those which have followed the efforts made at different times to revive the energies, and restore the decay, of the Church, by preaching

¹ I need hardly acknowledge that I am indebted to Wordworth's *Ode to Duty* for these thoughts—for I hope the reader is too familiar with it, not to detect the appropriation at once

love as the means of building up a holy life; just such success as they have had, compared with the effects of preaching justification by faith, such do I expect will always be found in that family where the wife loves her husband, but has not that trust in him, which cannot exist without obedience.¹ Passing over all other consequences, look at those to the man. I have confidently appealed to all good women

¹ Mr. Maurice, after showing how Luther's preaching of justification by faith was the proclaiming that the Son of God had, in His incarnation, death, and resurrection, made a marriage with our race, and that for a man to claim for himself the blessing and glory of that marriage, was the only way in which his conscience could be freed from the burden of the guilt which a forgetfulness of it had laid upon him—adds, ‘the Teutonic nations, retaining that reverence for marriage which had first prepared them for receiving Christianity, were able to grasp the idea—the corrupted Latins could not. Even the best and noblest of their teachers, bred in an ungenial atmosphere of monkery could see indeed the preciousness of love,—could speak beautifully of the gentle affections, which the spirit of man should feel for its heavenly bridegroom, but could not acknowledge, in terms at least, (and the time was come when it was needful that it should be acknowledged in terms) that the relationship is the ground of the affection, not the affection of the relationship.’—Kingdom of Christ, Vol. III, pp. 335, 336, 1st. edit. .

(that is, to all who respect their own sex, for this I take to be the true test of a woman's moral worth) whether they do not intuitively know and feel, that if they are to be either good or happy to the full, it must be by *trust in another*: and not less confidently do I assert that no man can be either of these *unless others have trust in him*. Let him have the finest moral capacity in the world, it can never be developed to any worth, except by this means: he must grow up weak and stunted, wretched in himself, and useless to others, unless his character is called forth by the faith of others in him. And specially is this the case as regards the faith of the wife in her husband. Her influence is the most constant and the most intimate, and his whole character and life—first in his own home, and then in every office he has to discharge towards his neighbours and his country—will, and always does, tell whether that influence has been the sun of faith, or the wintry blight which even affection will prove in a wife if it be disjoined from *faith*.

But, it may be asked, are not some women

superior to some men, not only in intellect, but in strength of will? is not this a fact of that original constitution of the sexes on which you rest your arguments? and is it not a fact of the same constitution, that such men and women prefer each other to persons of a different character, and in married life prove far better suited to each other than when the woman of strong will is matched with a man of still more strength than her own? Certainly, I reply, all these things are so: but, then, I must in turn ask, whether there is, or ever was, a woman in whom the presence of meekness and gentleness is not a virtue and grace, and the absence of them a vice? and whether the principle of faith or trust is not so deeply implanted in the heart of even the strongest-minded woman, that if she is too self-willed to trust in those who are the proper objects of her faith, she invariably seeks a substitute in some fashionable preacher, or doctor, or other anomalous individual?¹ whether there ever can be any man, in whom manly energy

¹ See below, page 74, note 2.

and independence are not desirable, or who does not show some signs of capacity for these? or whether any circumstances can absolve a wife from the duty of cultivating the one character in herself, and endeavouring to call forth the other in her husband, by the only means which either philosophy or experience declares to be effectual? Once more I say to the reader, look at facts, at the instances of married persons around you: do you not see that no varieties of individual character and condition are really in contradiction to this fundamental distinction, and that all are subject to this universal law—that neither intellect, nor affection, nor even piety, in a wife, receives that blessing from God which He bestows upon faith and obedience, nor, consequently, can bring forth the same fruits of spiritual and temporal good in her husband, her children, and her home? and do you not also see instances of wives, who do (and therefore can) faithfully obey husbands inferior to themselves in strength, or in wisdom, and who reap all the blessings of their obedience? Nay, are not such *often the most perfect* patterns of obedience?

Lastly, we shall get some further light on the subject by considering that the subordination of the female sex was ordained¹ as the appropriate remedy of that 'fault and corruption'² which, while it is inherent in all mankind, exhibits itself with characteristic difference in man and woman, and, consequently, has been subjected by God to different and characteristic discipline. The sentence pronounced upon Eve for the childish disobedience of eating an apple would seem so strangely disproportional to the offence as to be quite unintelligible,³ if we did not remember that the

¹ Genesis III, 16. 1 Timothy II, 11—14.

² Article on Original Sin.

³ Hence it has been the custom of commentators in all ages to invent a number of fictions about the glorious state of Adam and Eve in Paradise, for which there is not one word of authority in the book of Genesis. The history there given is as simple and matter of fact as possible; our first parents are described as quite infantile in their thoughts and actions, and differing from other human children of flesh and blood only in that they were the first, fresh from the hand of their Maker, and so free from such accumulated corruptions of mind and body as we inherit. The commentators I refer to (from whom I must specially except our own Patrick), assume the garden of Eden to have been the scene of mere monstrous magic, instead

first sin of the first woman must (from the very nature of things) be characteristic. The first temptation addressed itself to a constitutional frailness and peccability of will

of the beautiful and orderly creation of Him who declares that the work of his hands is this very heaven and earth which is now about us. And it is worth observing, that the modern German neologists, who wish to make out that this history of Adam and Eve is a mere mythology like those of the heathens, are obliged to take—and actually do take—these embellishments of the commentators as though they were in the text, which itself supplies them with no ground for their mythological theory. Indeed, the principle of neology—that the Scriptures are to be explained by the light of other books, instead of seeking in the Bible for the master-light which is to clear up their otherwise hopeless obscurities—must have been at work in the minds of those who thought they threw light on this simple history by adorning it with inventions about the wisdom and beauty and power of Adam and Eve, of their association with angels, playing with tigers like spaniels, living on gold and silver apples, and so forth. There is a striking contrast between a Paradise of God's making, and one made by a sorceress, in Fouqué's tale of the *Two Captains*, which well illustrates this subject.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to add, that the *poetical* language of the Hebrew prophets, in reference to Paradise, is no more meant to be understood literally than the description of the rivers of water flowing from the temple, or of the eagle planting a cedar in a city of merchants, and a vine in a fruitful field. That in poetry such descriptions of Eden and of man are *entirely appropriate*, might be shown, if this were the place.

which must have been in her, or she could not have been capable of being tempted : and the actual sin, so trifling if considered merely as an act, became as important as the greatest crime could have been, inasmuch as it was the outward and visible sign of that inward and spiritual evil which was deep as her life. And the sentence too is, in like manner, significant and symbolic, and pronounces the punishment and remedial discipline which were needed, not for that single act, but for that constitutional peccability and sinfulness which are the source of all particular acts of sin in each of us. ' These things were written for our learning ; ' in the record of these God has revealed to us the laws by which He governs His works, and the end for which He has made them. And accordingly we find in this simple account of the first transgression, an announcement that sin puts on a different form in man and in woman, corresponding (though in the way of diseased and monstrous perversion) with the proper character of each ; that an appropriate moral discipline is provided for each in the working of the several relations and circum-

stances of our earthly life; that this remedy is not a mere remedy, but one which acts by calling into vigour, and vigorous growth, the original constitution of each sex which sin has marred; and that forasmuch as even this divinely devised method of cure is not of itself sufficient to reach that heart of the disease which—deeper than its several manifestations—is common to all mankind, a Saviour and Lord of man is given us, who shall make the work effectual by His presence and power. The direct connexion of these things with the point of the marriage vows we are considering, is obvious. For (1st) Eve's eating the apple was an act of *wilfulness*, of mere will, uncontrolled either by her own reason, or by reference to the judgment of her husband¹ and the command of God; and no one who has considered the subject has any doubt that wilfulness is the fault to which women are constitutionally most liable:² (2ndly), the remedy for

¹ Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, &c. 1 Tim. II. 14.

² Compare the several passages in St. Paul's Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, in which he sets forth the principles which

this tendency is subjection to the will of another—a remedy which we see applied by God with a sternness which is terrible to behold; for we every day meet with instances of young girls, who, apparently from mere thoughtlessness and inexperience of the world, bind themselves to a slavery to some worthless man from which they are only to be freed by death; and we wonder why so heavy a punishment falls on so small a fault, till we understand that this one fault was but the sign of the

govern the social relations of women—especially that where he speaks of 'silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts (which word 'lusts'—*τιθυμίας*—signifies all vehement impulses and inclinations of the will), ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' In exact and striking contrast to the character of these 'captives' of the fashionable quacks and coxcombs of St. Paul's time, stands that of one of Shakspeare's good women, who, while she calls herself 'an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd,' adds—addressing herself to her betrothed lord—

' Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; and happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, is, that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours, to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.'

Merchant of Venice, Act III, Sc. 2.

whole inward being, and that *that* assuredly needed so severe and protracted a discipline (3rdly), this remedy is, at the same time, the proper means of calling into their fullest life

'The reason firm, the temperate will,'

which the poet rightly puts foremost among the virtues of 'a perfect woman:' (4thly), this obedience is founded on and derives all its efficacy from the higher obedience which the Church and each woman as a living member of the Church, shows to her divine Lord through the might of His own Spirit dwelling in her.

IX.

THE RING, THE MAN'S DECLARATION OF WORSHIP, AND THE ENDOWMENT.

With this ring I thee wed, with my body
thee worship, with my worldly goods I the
endow; in the name of the Father, and of the
Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

As the woman's position seemed to be illustrated by her being 'given from her father' or friend's hand,' so we have here the counterpart of that form, by which the positio-

of the man is asserted. He takes his wife by his own deliberate act: and, though the ratification of the Church is necessary, and is given immediately after, yet it seems to be here signified, that he himself is eminently the actor in the matter; that in him is the right, and on him rests the whole responsibility, of now laying the foundation of his future house; and that as he acts in the Name of God, so he must answer to God Himself, and not only to the Church, for what he does, and for all the consequences thereof. All the meaning of those words, 'For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body'—all the 'great mystery' which St. Paul declares to be therein—is wrapped up in this act like the germ in the seed. The seed is small, and the germ is quite hid from the eye, but a tree may one day spring from it which shall fill the heaven with its branches and cover the land with its shadow.

We shall better see the appropriateness of the several parts of this declaration, and con-

sequently of the previous vows of the man, of which it is both the summary and the explanation, when we have examined them separately.

Of the Ring. After explaining, in the extract given above, the correspondence between the plighting of troth and the *sealing* of a deed of conveyance, Wheatly proceeds to say, that besides the invisible pledge of our fidelity, the man is also obliged to deliver a visible pledge: this the rubric directs shall be a ring, which, in the first Common Prayer Book of Edward VI., and in the Salisbury Manual, is called ‘a token of spousage.’ The ring was anciently a seal, and the delivery of it to another was at once a pledge on the part of him who gave it, and a proof of his trust in the person who received it;¹ and therefore it at the same time denotes the husband’s ‘purposed, endless continuance in that which he never ought to revoke,’² and his admission of his wife ‘as a sharer of his counsels and a joint partner in his honour and

¹ *Wheatly*, X. v. 4. ² *Hooker*, Ecc. Pol. V. lxxiii. [8.]

estate.'¹ And not unfitly might it be added that it is a visible link in the golden chain of love and duty which henceforth binds together the hearts of husband and wife with its indissoluble tie. And as the affections not unwisely love to find all their own varied hues reflected from so dear a pledge, it is said that the ring is of gold, that the noblest, purest, and most incorruptible of metals may remind us of the generous, sincere, and lasting love that should be between married persons ; that it is round (the most perfect of all figures and the hieroglyphic of eternity), to imply that conjugal affection should have no end ; that it is put on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand, because thence there proceeds a particular

¹ Wheatly, X. v. 4. And Bingham (*Antiquities*, XXII. iii. 5.) quotes these words from Clemens Alexandrinus—‘The ring is given her, not as an ornament, but as a seal, to signify the woman’s duty in preserving the goods of her husband, because the care of the house belongs to her.’ Bingham shows in the same place, from Tertullian, that in the early ages of the Church the giving of the ring belonged to the espousals, not to the marriage itself, and was one of the innocent rites which the Church preserved from the ancient Roman mode of betrothal. It is believed that it was worn by the Roman women on the same finger as by our women now.

vein to the heart.¹ The laying the ring on the book, and its re-delivery to the man by the priest, is evidently intended to express its consecration.

Of the Endowment. In the first Book of Edw. VI., after the words *with this ring I thee wed*, followed, ‘this gold and silver I thee give,’ accompanied by the gift of a purse of money. These words and act were afterwards omitted, apparently because they were understood to be the remains of the Saxon custom of buying the bride of her father,² though it seems that in Wheatly’s time some persons still retained the custom of giving the purse at the words ‘with all my worldly goods I thee endow.’³ But though the Church has omitted the symbolical act, the words which she still prescribes are significant of the same thing. The civil law secures a legal provision for the

¹ Wheatly, X. v. 4. The last he gives from the Salisbury Manual, justly observing that the moral, (and he should have added, as he seems to mean,) the time-honoured symbol, may be well retained though the supposed physical fact is found to be imaginary.

² See Hooker, Eccl. Pol. V. lxxiii. [6.] ³ Wheatly, X. v. 4.

wife by dower or settlement : but the Church here teaches, that the husband must enter into the *spirit* of that legal provision ; he must understand that he is not to stop short at the outward and prescribed acts which alone the civil authorities can take cognizance of, but that the having his worldly goods in common with his wife,—the acknowledging her to be mistress wherever he is master,¹—must, in the strictest sense of the words, be religious, a real part of his daily life and habits as a Christian man.

Of the ~~Worship~~. The Puritans wished to get rid of this word, and though King James refused his consent, it was promised at the review of the liturgy after the Restoration of King Charles II., that it should be altered to *honour*. Happily—rather say by God's Providence—it was somehow kept after all : and, perhaps, I should not exaggerate its importance if I were to assert that its preservation is

¹ So Wheatly translates the words *Ubi tu Caius, ego Caia*, which the Roman bride addressed her husband with, on entering his house. X. v. 4.

as of great consequence to the ideal completeness and the practical morality and Christianity of the whole service, as that of the woman's vow of obedience. I have given, not a full exposition, but a few hints of the method by which I think we arrive at the meaning the Church would have us see in the one, and the application of the same method to the examination of the other, will perhaps make it plain that she intends this to be the no less significant counterpart of that, and the key-stone of the whole structure of the man's present vows and future performance of them.

We keep the girl in the shade and shelter of home, lest 'the wind of heaven visit her face too roughly,' and so she lose the beauty and innocence of womanhood: we expose the boy to the heat and storm of life, that so he may 'find in hardness a natural and prompt alacrity,' without which he can never be of any worth, or do any work in the world. The hazard is great even where the trial is watched over by wise and loving parents, but still it must be ventured: the boy must learn now, and he *must keep in mind* the lesson through life,

that he is here to *work*, even at the risk of making his hands coarse and dirty ; and that he must acquire the power and the habit of resisting temptation, and not of flying from it, when it meets him in the path of duty, which for *him* must ever lie through the bleak wilderness and the pestilential marshes of this evil world. But, though this is the right, the only way of forming a manly character, yet there is no doubt that the result is very rarely attained so perfectly as that there is not a considerable degree of coarseness mixed up with strength, and of selfishness with self-guidance and independence. We may find every other variety of evil in various individual men, but coarseness (often of spirit when the manners are highly polished, or more properly varnished), and selfishness, are those which characterise the sex, and which consequently gnaw like canker-worms at the very root of married and domestic life. To provide against these evils, to call forth the counteracting virtues, and so to form the Christian, and therefore perfect, husband, the Church not only requires of the man that he

engage to love and to cherish his wife, to comfort and to honour her, to keep her in sickness and in health, in poverty and in riches, so long as they both shall live, but she makes him sum up all these in this new and more emphatic form. She who in old times called forth the spirit of Christian knighthood in feudal courts and castles, and taught the proud and fierce baron that, while his glittering arms and his stately war-horse were but the signs of his nobility, his name and his honour drew their true life and strength from his faithful service of the poor and the oppressed, the woman and the orphan :¹—she who taught the Christian soldier to practise, and the Christian poet to paint, the union of courage and strength with gentleness and humility :—she who, caring for us no less than for our fathers, still keeps alive, in ‘an age of sophisters, economists, and calculators,’² the old spirit of chivalry under the

¹ See note C at the end.

² Burke said the age of chivalry was *gone*, and was succeeded by an age of sophisters, economists, and calculators : *but his own whole life*—public and private—witnessed that the *spirit of chivalry* was truly in him, though to the outward

modest guise of the Christian gentleman:—she bids the husband bind himself to such knightly service, to such soldier-like and romantic allegiance and devotion, to such courteous deference and respect towards his own wife in all the daily intercourse of common life, whether she be lady or peasant, whether he be prince or ploughman; she commands him to *worship* his wife as the living shrine of ideal beauty and goodness. Not to *worship* with his spirit, as those Puritans seemed to have supposed, but *with his body*. ‘It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve:’—this is the law of man’s spirit, which he who breaks inevitably becomes the slave of superstition and sin: but not only is this sole worship of God compatible with that worship of God’s image which the Church here ordains, but the latter is only possible in as far as the former is

eye, he was only a man ‘in spectacles, with a bob wig and a brown coat which seemed so tight that he could hardly move:’ and he was surely not the sole possessor of the principles and feelings which in him gave birth to thoughts, and words, and deeds, which will never die.

realized. Some base adulation (the act of slaves not of free men) of power, physical or intellectual, in man—some sensual, Caliban-like admiration of physical beauty in woman—there may be where the worship of God in spirit and in truth is absent; but the proper reverence for humanity and therefore for womanhood, in which that humanity exhibits itself in weakness and passivity, there is not and cannot be.

And hence this worship derives so great importance and sacredness, that the Church not only makes it thus prominent a part of the husband's engagement, but requires the profession of it to be made in the holiest and most awful of all forms—*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*: a fact worthy to be meditated upon by all who think courtesy and politeness things of little consequence. And does not experience prove the Church to be in the right? is it not found in practice that the unity and harmony of a family so depend upon the politeness of its members to each other, that these never exist *where it is wanting*; while it will constantly

supply the place of what we might fancy far more important and influential virtues—may supply, not by substitution of itself merely, but by fostering into energy a moral life that must else have perished out of that home? And if so, is it not also a fact—to be witnessed every day along with the others—that this politeness is found among the members where it first habitually actuates the head, and that where the husband and father is selfish and churlish, his image will be reflected too faithfully from every object around him?¹

I would just point out that the giving of the ring, and the declaration of endowment, like two smaller jewels, form appropriate parts of the whole rich clasp of wedlock, of which this worship is the chief stone: and then I will conclude this subject by quotations from 'those two lights of men,' from whose treasures I have already gathered so many spoils both of thought and word.

¹ A lady once observed to me, that St. Peter proved himself to have the true spirit of a gentleman when he wrote 'Giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel':—a remark worth recording.

'A person may be highly estimable on the whole, nay, amiable as neighbour, friend, housemate—in short, in all the concentric circles of attachment save only the last and inmost; and yet from how many causes be estranged from the highest perfection in this! Pride, coldness, or fastidiousness of nature, worldly cares, an anxious or ambitious disposition, a passion for display, a sullen temper,—one or the other—too often proves 'the dead fly in the compost of spices,' and any one is enough to unfit it for the precious balm of unction. For some mighty good sort of people, too, there is not seldom a sort of solemn saturnine, or if you will, ursine vanity, that keeps itself alive by sucking the paws of its own self-importance. And as this high sense, or rather sensation of their own value is, for the most part, grounded on negative qualities, so they have no better means of preserving the same but by negatives—that is, by not doing or saying anything, that might be put down for fond, silly, or nonsensical;—or (to use their own phrase) by never forgetting themselves, *which some* of their acquaintance are uncha-

ritable enough to think the most worthless object they could be employed in remembering. The same effect is produced in thousands by the too general insensibility to a very important truth ; this, namely, that the misery of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year, the death of a child ; years after, a failure in trade ; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily ;—in all but the singularly unfortunate, the integral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life, are easily counted, and distinctly remembered. The happiness of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions—the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heart-felt compliment in the disguise of playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.'¹

This is one. In the other, which follows, the quotation is made immediately for the sake of the last four lines : but I doubt not I should

¹ Coleridge's Poetical Works, II., 122, 123.

be blamed by my readers if I did not give the whole, especially as the former part is not less exactly appropriate to some previous pages of my book.

' What need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay,
 These humble Nuptials to proclaim or grace ?
 Angels of Love, look down upon the place,
 Shed on the chosen Vale a sun-bright day !
 Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
 Even for such promise :—serious is her face,
 Modest her mien ; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
 With gentleness, in that becoming way
 Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear ;
 No disproportion in her soul, no strife :
 But, when the closer view of wedded life
 Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
 From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
 To her indulgent Lord become more dear.'¹

X.

THE RATIFICATION IN THE NAME OF GOD.

The priest, bearing the commission, and clothed with the authority, of Him who is with His Church to the end of the world, and who by His presence and power makes valid every lawful act of those to whom He has entrusted

¹ Wordsworth's Miscellaneous Sonnets, pt. 1st., s. XXV.

the keys of His kingdom, first prays that God will remember His promise, and will bind in heaven what is now bound on earth, sending His blessing upon those whom His minister now blesses in His Name, and so inwardly knitting their hearts together that they may ever perform and keep, in its whole and full meaning, the vow and covenant of which the ring given and received is the outward token and pledge. Next, nothing doubting that the prayer is heard, that his commission is in full force, and that it is not he, but the Holy Ghost in him, who now acts and speaks, he joins their right hands together, saying, **Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder;** proclaims to the congregation, I pronounce that they be man and wife together, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen; and adds this blessing, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

Thus is the covenant finally and effectually ratified :¹—‘sealed, published, and declared,’ in the language at once of the English law and of the old Catholic Church.² That this act and word of the minister is the act and word

¹ ‘As it was an ancient custom among the Romans, and other heathens, for masters to ratify the marriages of their servants ; so since we profess to be the servants of God, it is necessary that He should confirm our contract.’ Wheatly, X. vi. 6. Rather make the consequence the cause, and say, that because it is necessary that God should confirm the contract of men His servants, therefore the Gentiles, who, though they had not the law, had the work of the law written in their hearts, were led to recognize and set forth this truth in those earthly relations of master and servant, which are shadows of man’s relation to his Divine Lord.

² See the passage from Tertullian at the beginning of this book : on which passage Gothofred (as quoted by Bingham) says, that Tertullian alludes to the five gentile rites in marriage : the ‘conciliators,’ or friends who arranged the match ; the offering of the kiss and spousal gifts, which indissolubly confirmed the engagement ; the signing the contract-deed ; the presence and attestation of friends and witnesses ; and lastly, the consent of the parents. Bingham, Antiq. XXII, iv. 1. Bingham also quotes Gregory Nazienzen, who speaks of joining the right hands of the bride and bridegroom together, and both of them to the hand of God, ‘where joining of them to the hand of God is plainly but another expression for the benediction.’

of God, we all in practice believe, else we could not feel or think that there is any real difference between marriage so ratified, and the bare civil contract before the registrar, or more than a civil difference between it and no contract at all : but it would be better, it would bring forth better fruit in the lives of us all, married and unmarried, if we meditated more upon this our belief, and so fostered it into activity, instead of ‘ taking it for granted,’ and then leaving it to be forgotten and die away. For is it a light thing, O thou Bridegroom, who art rejoicing in thy strength, and feeling that now is the true springtide of thy manhood in which thou goest forth to found a family of which thou shálst be the head ?—is it a light thing, O thou Bride, who art leaving thy father’s house that thou mayest become the life of a new home, in which hope whispers that thou shalt find at once the unfading leaves, and the white flowers, and the green and the ripe fruit, of which thy bridal wreath reminds thee ?¹—is it a light thing that ye are made

¹ I heard last year that it was not then the fashion for a

94 THE RATIFICATION IN THE NAME OF GOD.

man and wife in the same Name and by the same Word in and by which each of you was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? If through the might of that Name—of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—you were in your baptism ‘born anew,’ ‘released of your sins,’ ‘sanctified with the Holy Ghost,’ ‘and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church,’¹ the same Name must be no less effectual in your marriage now. Be sure that you are now called to begin a new life, a new stage of that same regenerate baptismal life which was given you of God’s free grace at the first; that by the same grace you are now loosed from the chains of all previous bad habits which you may have long felt the bondage of but found no strength able to break, and that only fresh sin can bring you again under their power; that in the stead of such habits the germs of a holy life of duty are, under the quickening influence of God’s Spirit, already beginning to

bride to wear an orange flower wreath. Fashion should keep her foolish hands from meddling with such things.

¹ Baptismal service.

bud in your hearts, and to promise you an abundant fruitage of all virtues, even of those which perchance—whether they had been lost to you by your own fault and frailty, or by the blight of irresistible circumstances—you have hitherto mourned for with the mourning of those that have no hope; that your house with all its daily round of home duties and joys, of work and rest, is become a consecrated chapel and oratory in the Church of God. And as the great and inestimable blessing of baptism is that it is the pledge that you are saved not by works of righteousness which you have done, but by the free grace and election of God choosing you before you did any thing to merit that choice,—so remember that your married life stands not in your personal qualities, but in the marriage covenant, and that you are made one by *it*, and not by any thing that you can do for, or find in, each other. The Church did not forget nor omit to declare at the proper season the importance of your taking your marriage in hand with all due regard to such personal qualities; but now the time for that is past; your decision is irre-

96 THE RATIFICATION IN THE NAME OF GOD.

vocable and must not be reviewed; henceforth you must remember only that you are man and wife together, and made so in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and see that ye lead the rest of your life according to this beginning. Thou art to love thy wife because she is thy wife, thou art to love thy husband because he is thy husband; this is to be the one qualification which henceforth includes all others, the one ground which sufficiency of your marriage covenant to these your wedded life. Nor must you doubt the sufficiency of your marriage covenant under all circumstances; you will find it sufficient under all circumstances if only you will believe in its sufficiency, and in Him who—because He has ratified it—is ever present to maintain it entire. You will find it sufficient for all the purposes for which it was made, just as certainly as you find your election in baptism sufficient to secure to you all the blessings of salvation by Christ if only you claim them by faith in Him: and as we are taught¹ that as often

¹ I refer to this passage in Luther's sermon on th

we fall into sin we are to have recourse to our baptism, that there we may again obtain the Holy Ghost to be present with us, so I do not scruple to say to you, that as often as you find either sin or suffering threatening to break down the unity and destroy the blessings of

phany: 'Baptism is the beginning of repentance. As often therefore as thou fallest into sin, have recourse unto thy baptism, there thou shalt again obtain the Holy Ghost, who may be present with thee.' The connexion between baptism and marriage which I have endeavoured to point out in the text appears to me to be so important to a right understanding of the latter, that while I earnestly commend to the reader the study of the baptismal service in the Prayer Book, and of the relation of the idea of baptism there embodied, with the whole teaching of the Church and the Bible, I would add, that in the English volume of Luther's Sermons he will find probably the profoundest and most practical of all comments upon that service. The sermon on *Salvation by Grace without works* is entirely on this subject; and it is treated largely of in several of the others. Luther ever gives baptism the same prominence as St. Paul does, like him always referring to it as the pledge of our election in Christ and of our right to all the privileges of that election, like him always asserting or assuming that in baptism an actual union has been made between Christ and us, and that if we claim that union by faith, we become actual participators in the righteousness of Christ—even as the wife becomes an actual participator in the name and rank and virtues of her husband.

your home, you are to claim boldly of God that He fulfil His part in the covenant entered into on your marriage day, and then He assuredly will maintain it against all the power of the devil or man.¹ The time must

¹ I am not unaware how many instances might be brought from every-day life in apparent contradiction to all I have here said. But it is only an *apparent* contradiction: I have not supposed the rite of Christian marriage to be a magical charm which can transmute thoughtlessness, worldliness, and selfishness, into a state of life begun, continued, and ended in God, but a sacramental pledge of that life to them who worthily receive it in faith: nor do I say that the discovery in after life of this its sacramental character will then effect more than a very imperfect loosening of those fetters of wrong habits of mind and disposition, and very partial mitigation of the painful consequences of those habits. I have only written for those who are just entering into wedlock, and for whom its life has not yet been 'decayed by the fraud, and forlice of the devil, or by their own carnal will and frailness, and therefore may be preserved from such decay if they will timely wise; yet, in the words of an old divine, 'I cannot leave this melancholy strain without one sweet touch of comfort. That's this: Aaron fell in the wilderness, yet went up first to the top of the mountain and died sweetly in the land of war and confusions; yet nothing can hinder us going up to the mount of divine contemplation and communion in this wilderness, from dying sweetly on the top o' delights, in the bosom of the Spirit.'

come when the sunshine, which now gilds even the meanest forms, and makes the whole world lying about you to seem like a fairy land, shall fade into the light of common day, and even that day too often be clouded with the wintry storms of this life, and darkness and change and death come over the scene. Then remember who built your house, and what is its corner-stone: remember that in your marriage God the Father undertook to be the Father of your house, as he had been thitherto of your persons, and promised that His Fatherly Hand should ever be over you in all relations, in all circumstances, of your married life; remember that then too God the Son, who redeemed you and at your baptism became your elder Brother and your Friend, testified that He died not only for God's one Family, the Church, but by the same shedding of his blood hath purchased for Himself each particular family within that Family, and that by His resurrection He has become the ever-present Lord and Protector of *your* household also; remember that then God the Holy Ghost, who from

your infancy had been dwelling in you as the only source of even the least grace or virtue, descended upon you and became the very Bond of your union, and the Lord and Giver of life in every act and fruit of that union. Remember, believe, these things, and you will find them true in the darkest and longest trials which you may be called to bear—you will find them true because they *are* true : true indeed, whether you believe them or no, for they are the free gifts of God to you and all His elect people, not because of your choosing Him, but because He has chosen you. Yet even because they are true, whether you believe them or no, is it necessary that you should believe if you will be blessed by their truth. For they are not true unless they address themselves to your heart and spirit, and are able to supply the deep wants of these : and we wholly sever our words from their sense and meaning if we speak of the heart and spirit of man seeking or receiving anything but by faith. Even in the utterance the meaning becomes changed, and ‘heart and spirit’ signify the self-interested *feelings* and desires of our earthly nature.

But if you have this faith,—if by faith you realize this as it were sacramental consecration of your wedlock and your home, then, looking stedfastly to the end, you will not mourn greatly for that inevitable fading of the flowers of spring, fair and fragrant though they be : nay, you will call to mind, that the flower must fade if the fruit is to be formed and ripen, and so cease to grieve that there is nothing in this life which is not a fading and dying flower, when you not only know assuredly that beneath that flower is the good fruit of life eternal, but also eat of it by faith even here on earth. Nor shall you be without many returns of such springtide, though they be transient; nor without much and often renewed gladness of heart not the less true and Christian because you know that the sunshine and blossoms which have kindled it by their coming, must speedily leave you again. Only let nothing, no power of life or of death, move you from holding fast that rock on which you are founded—**THE NAME OF GOD.**

Would that I had wisdom to apprehend, and eloquence to declare, the mystery of this Name

aright. The Name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is the foundation of the Church. In this Name we are baptized, and assert our Catholic faith; in this Name we are confirmed in that faith; in this Name we offer up our praises and our prayers, and receive absolution and blessing; in this Name we draw near the table of the Lord; in this Name, marriage, the source and bond of all human relations, is consecrated: in a word, this Name compasses us about from the cradle to the grave, and is the ground of our whole Christian life, spiritual or temporal. And since this most holy Name is the very substance of the Church and of each of her members, there is no vain repetition in her perpetual use of it. Our minds cannot reflect too much on it; our hearts cannot be too full of the love of it; our whole being cannot repose too perfectly on it. As it may be said of the creed that he who repeats it as an essential part of daily worship till he can see into the life of it, will thus become a truer believer *than by any other means*; so I venture to affirm that he will rise to the most spiritual

apprehension of God and of His Church, and will worship Him best, who realizes most thoroughly the meaning of ‘that sacred hymn of glory, than which nothing doth sound more heavenly in the ears of faithful men’—*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.* This is the centre, the key-note, of all praise, as praise itself is of all worship. But vainly should I attempt to rise to the height of this great argument. If only I have by these weak words arrested the reader’s attention, and called him to meditate for himself in silence on that which is indeed ineffable, it is enough.

XI.

OF THE INTROITS OR PSALMS.

The rubric immediately before the preface directs that the marriage shall be solemnized ‘in the body of the Church,’ which direction

¹ Hooker, Ecc. Pol. V. xlvi. [11.]

has of late been again attended to in some places. And the marriage covenant being now completed, the minister is to go to the Lord's table, there to proceed with what is in fact the prelude to the communion service¹ in a form beautifully modified to an exact accordance with the special occasion, and which the Church desires should be followed by the communion itself. And the Minister or Clerks, going to the Lord's Table, are to say or sing one of the Psalms following. From very ancient times, even before the days of St. Jerome, a psalm was appointed to be sung at the beginning of the communion office, and was called *Introitus* or *Introit*, from its being sung or said while the priest made his entrance within the rails of the altar: which practice we still retain in another form. And in the first Common Prayer Book of Edward VI. there was a proper introit for each sunday and holy-day throughout the year, prefixed to the several collects, epistles, and gospels, and selected for its connexion

¹ Wheatly, X. viii. 6.

with these.¹ And though these were afterwards omitted, the English Church, as we see, has otherwise both in the ordinary and the occasional services retained the practice of appointing proper psalms, many of which are the very same as have been used at the like seasons by the whole Catholic Church from of old. The first of the psalms here, says Wheatly, has been ‘thought by some to have been drawn up for an epithalamium or marriage song, and for that reason taken into the marriage office by all Christians in the world : the other is proper to be used sometimes, when the age of the parties perhaps, not giving a prospect of the blessings mentioned in the foregoing psalm, renders that not so suitable to the occasion.’²

XII.

OF THE SUPPLICATIONS AND PRAYERS.

The minister now standing at the Lord’s table, and the man and the woman kneeling

¹ For this account of the Introits, see Wheatly, V. Introduct. viii.

² X. viii. 6.

before it, he offers up prayers which, as I have pointed out before, are of the nature of a litany, or earnest supplication, of the Church yet militant and in actual conflict with all the powers of evil. First, the ancient form,¹

Lord, have mercy upon us,
Christ, have mercy upon us,
Lord, have mercy upon us,

which, as here, very commonly precedes *the Lord's Prayer*: 'whereby we are taught first to bewail our unworthiness, and pray for mercy; and then with an humble boldness to look up to heaven, and call God our Father, and beg farther blessings of Him.'² And just because this is the universal pattern of prayer, because it is that which has best expressed the deepest desires of the heart of man, woman, and child, in every age and land in which it has been taught, however various the form of those desires may have been—therefore is it most exactly applicable to this particular occasion.

¹ It is of great antiquity both in the Eastern and Western *Churches*. *Wheatly*, III. xvi.

That the new-married husband and wife should address themselves to a Father, to whom they can commit the care of themselves and of the house now founded in them, and that He should be their Father in heaven, whose love and wisdom and power are not finite and imperfect like an earthly parent's : that they should desire that His Name, in which their union has just been consecrated and blessed, should be hallowed : that they should pray for the manifestation of that kingdom in which they have of individual subjects been made an incorporate and municipal body, and that they may be continually governed by that Will which alone can guide their wills in the due fulfilment of their new duties : that they should ask for daily bread, now that the care of providing food for their household, both for the body and soul,—a care which no worldly affluence will enable them to dispense with—has been undertaken by them : that they should remember that only by mutual forbearance and forgiveness of that frailty of the flesh which alike finds irritation in the trials and the pleasures of life, can they hope ' ever to remain in perfect love and peace toge-

ther,' and should therefore pray that they may find the spirit, and form the habit, of that forbearance in the realization of their Heavenly Father's continual forgiveness of their trespasses :¹ that they should confess that, whether their faith is to be proved by worldly prosperity and wealth, or by affliction and poverty, they are too weak to stand alone in the day of trial, and therefore supplicate that they may not be led into temptation such as alone can teach those, who have no such sense of their own weakness, what is in their hearts : that they, feeling that they have now fresh need of a Divine Lord and Saviour to protect and lead them through the new difficulties and dangers which their new duties and responsibilities must bring with them, should call upon God to be their Deliverer from evil :—are not these at once the very petitions most suitable to their present position and circumstances, and those to which the Lord's Prayer supplies the exactly fitting form of words ?

¹ Luther says, in the sermon *on the Kingdom of God*, that '*in this kingdom thou shalt find nothing but grace, goodness, pardon, and forgiveness of sins, love and gentleness.*'

Of the **Suffrages** that follow the **Lord's Prayer** I will only repeat (what I have already pointed out) that they are among the links by which this office is connected with the daily prayers as well as with the other occasional services, while there is at the same time such variation of the details as shall make them accord, in a wonderful and beautiful harmony, with each particular occasion.¹

Not less elaborate is the workmanship of each of the succeeding collects and the blessing, like the several parts of some cathedral, in which there is not only a unity of beauty in the whole, but where every ornament down to the smallest flower is a perfect piece of art in itself. I will only point out in the *first* prayer, in which the Church supplicates for those spiritual blessings of which wedlock is the special pledge, and the means whereby they are received, that she addresses God as **God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob**,—thus plead-

¹ This will be more evident if the reader compares *all* the services, including the four properly national ones—for the 5th of November, the 30th of January, the 29th of May, and the 20th of June.

ing with Him that covenant in which family relationships were first formally recognised as living bonds between God and man, but of which the blessings were not to be confined to the patriarchs and their children, but to be freely bestowed on all families of the earth; and at the same time awakening the hearts of those by and for whom the prayer is now offered to the remembrance and consideration of that patriarchal life of *Abraham* and *Sarah* (as, in a former prayer, of *Isaac* and *Rebekah*) as the Scriptural model of the married state. In the *second*, while she prays for the best of all earthly blessings, the *gracious gift* of children, she remembers that not by itself merely would even this gift be a blessing; that if children are to be a blessing, and not a curse, to their father and mother, they must be *Christianly* and *virtuously brought up, to the praise and honour of God*; and therefore while she asks for them this 'heritage that cometh of the Lord,' she asks that they may also live together so long in *godly love and honesty* that they may see their *children* so growing up round them. In the *third collect*, which is for grace that the man

and wife may live together in holy love and in the fulfilment of their duties to each other, consider the two-fold preface in which the ground of these duties and of the inviolable bond from which they spring, is set forth. First, O God, who by thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing; Who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint that out of man (created after thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning; and knitting them together didst teach, that it never should be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by matrimony hast made one:—where the settled order of the creation, and of man as the last and highest work of creation, is set forth as the foundation of the mutual duties of husband and wife: yet not that order by itself (for if creation were a mere machine of nature its existence could involve no duties), but in its living connexion with the Almighty God, who was the original Maker of all things out of nothing, the Appointer of the relations between the woman and the man—created after His own image—and Himself the Teacher of the moral duties thence proceed.

ing. And second, O God, who hast consecrated the state of matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church :—where that highest significance of wedlock, which, having been known in the secret counsels of God before the foundations of the world, was first made fully manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is declared as the inmost life of the same duties: but of this I have spoken before.

Like thoughts will suggest themselves as to the final Blessing. In this the priest—with no unauthorised or doubting boldness—calls down from Almighty God, the Creator of mankind, at once that holiness and bliss with which He did sanctify and join together our first parents, Adam and Eve, while yet in Eden, and that far higher sanctification and benediction of the riches of His grace, that gift of a new life which the apostle Paul (of whom we are reminded by the words *riches*, *grace*, which he loves to use when speaking of the Gospel) habitually declares to be freely bestowed on all *in baptism*, and as freely enjoyed by all who

through faith in Christ claim the privileges of that baptism :—and of which same life the Church now conducts a fertilizing rill—‘ of living waters and streams from Lebanon’—into the garden of wedlock, calling on Him who

from the first

Was present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat brooding on the vast abyss,
Making it pregnant,

and who in the day of Pentecost descended with the sound as of a mighty rushing wind; calling on Him and saying,

Awake O north wind ; and blow thou south ;
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.

Let my Beloved come into His garden,
And eat His pleasant fruits.¹

XIII.

THE EXHORTATION.

‘ In all the old Common Prayer Books (that is till the last review²) the rubric before this exhortation was worded thus : *Then shall begin*

¹ Song of Songs, IV, 16.

² In 1661.

the Communion.¹ And after the Gospel shall be said a Sermon, wherein ordinarily (so oft as there is any marriage) the office of a man and wife shall be declared according to holy Scripture; or if there be no Sermon, the Minister shall read as followeth. Why the rubric was altered shall be shown in the next section. In the mean while I shall observe, that if the married persons are disposed to communicate, the office for the Communion must still begin immediately after the fore-mentioned blessing. And after the Gospel and Nicene Creed, if there be no sermon declaring the duties of man and wife, the exhortation here appointed is to be read instead of it. For the married persons having mutually engaged to live together according to God's holy ordinance, that is, according to those laws which He has ordained in

¹ Mr. Palmer says that in the old English church the celebration of the Communion began before the prayer or benediction beginning 'O God, who by thy mighty power.' Origin Liturg. II, 217. This would perhaps still more completely incorporate the Communion with the Marriage service, & more exactly correspond with the method (of which I speak immediately) adopted in the Ordination services.

His Word; it is very necessary they should hear and know what those laws are which they have engaged to perform. It was God's own command, that the kings of Israel should have a copy of the law delivered to them at their coronation; and there is the same reason to give this abstract to those that have taken upon themselves the state of matrimony. For which reason, instead of the Epistle and Gospel used in the offices of the Greek and Roman Churches, here is a full collection of the duties of both parties, drawn from the epistles of two great apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, in imitation of the practice of the primitive Church, which, always after the celebration of a marriage, exhorted the parties to keep their matrimonial vow inviolate.¹ I have already touched upon the chief points spoken of in this exhortation, and therefore here leave it to the consi-

¹ Wheatly, X, viii. Mr. Palmer says, 'It does not seem that such an exhortation was used in the English churches before the reform of our offices, in the time of Edward VI; but the rituals of the churches of Liege and Milan contain directions for a similar exhortation.' *Origines Liturg.* II, 219.

deration—may it be deep, earnest, prayerful—
of my readers themselves.

XIV.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

This rubric previously to the review of the Prayer Book in 1661 was peremptory—*The new-married persons, the same day of their marriage, must receive the Holy Communion*—but altered to its present form on the objection of the dissenting ministers at the conference at the Savoy, who said that ‘this either enforced all such as were unfit for the sacrament to forbear marriage, contrary to Scripture, which approves the marriage of all men; or else compelled all that should marry to come to the Lord’s Table, though never so unprepared.’¹—

¹ Wheatly, X, ix. The passage (as given by Wheatly) goes on to enforce their objection, ‘the rather because that marriage festivals are too often accompanied with such diversions, as are unsuitable to those Christian duties, which ought to be before, and follow after, the receiving of that holy sacrament.’ A striking instance of the meeting of extremes—the anti-catholic puritan agreeing in spirit with the anti-catholic papist. I

The Church doubtless exercised a wise discretion in the change, which is in accordance with the principle upon which she does not forbid persons to come to the morning prayer on sunday unless they also remain to the completion of the communion service. For she does not the less plainly assert the fitness and importance of their partaking of the holy feast, but only guards against the danger—then chiefest—of turning into an act of mere formality that of which the very design and meaning require that it should be the free-will act of the whole heart. And I trust that now the

have before pointed out how the latter inculcates the monstrous doctrine that marriage is a state of unholiness licensed by the Church, instead of one of the chief instruments of true Christian holiness : and here in like manner the puritan considers a marriage-festival as a profane revel, licensed by the same authority, but which, being intrinsically evil, must defile the Lord's Supper if they be not kept quite apart from each other. It would be hard to say which is the more irreligious and demoralizing part of the notion—that the Gospel does license sin within certain limits ; or that the right partaking of this holy feast is not the only way of duly hallowing every common festival, and of strengthening its guests against the temptation to turn it into an occasion of selfish enjoyment and of 'divertisements unsuitable' to the character of a Christian man.

time is not far off, when the growing feeling and understanding of our inestimable privileges as members of the Catholic Church, will cause this provision and direction for the receiving of the communion at the time of marriage to remain no longer a dead letter, and that all serious persons will look on that sacrament as no less a part of the marriage service than their vows or the benediction of the minister—remembering here too the words of Him who has said, ‘ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.’

It will throw light upon the method of the Church in this matter if we compare the ordination services and the form (handed down from very ancient times) of the coronation of our sovereigns, with this of holy matrimony, in all of which there is the same introduction of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, as the bond and seal of the solemn engagements in each case entered into. I have pointed out already¹ how the

¹ The method I have adopted of following the order of the service, and commenting on each successive part, has made

words of the Church, on tying the knot of wedlock and proclaiming its inviolability, connect marriage with the sacrament of Baptism ; how she then teaches that as baptism is, by the free gift of God, the beginning of a new life to all who are thereby received into God's family, so really—so certainly—is the marriage which the Church makes and blesses a fresh beginning of that same regenerate life to the married persons, in all that relates to their union and to the family of which it is the foundation : and in like manner are they now reminded that in the other sacrament of the Lord's Supper must they ever find the food and nourishment necessary for the continuance of the same life in them. Believing this, acting upon this belief, how would the hearts of married persons be quickened and their minds enlightened in the participation of this mystery of

repetition, here and in other places, unavoidable. In the service itself, in which the latter half is in a great measure the same as the former, only recast into new and more beautiful forms of prayer and praise, the repetition is a real merit—just as it is in music, or in the writings of the Hebrew Prophets, with whose spirit the Church is ever deeply imbued.

our common faith ! How would their communion with God and with their brethren in this sacrament become living and practical when they felt it to be thus inseparably connected with all the affections and interests and cares of their earthly fellowship ; how would that earthly fellowship be transfigured to a heavenly and unfading brightness when it was thus found to be a true part of the universal fellowship of the Church of Christ ! Even now, in the morning of love, and hope, and joy, thy heart tells thee, O Bride, O Bridegroom, that these are not deep enough to satisfy thy soul, —tells thee so then most plainly when most thou feelest how pure and holy and of God they are : but draw near to *this* marriage feast, clothed in the marriage garment which has been provided for you, ‘offering and presenting yourselves, your souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice to God,’ and then shall you be so ‘fulfilled with His grace and heavenly benediction’ that the inmost and largest desires of your hearts shall be satisfied. *Here shall ye learn the meaning of that pledge of wedlock—the ring given and received—and*

why it and other pledges which to the cold understanding may seem trivial and worthless, do express to your hearts the *fact* of your union as no words can do, when ye see plainly its relation to those holy symbols of the bread and wine, (as of the water in baptism,) which, mean and earthly as they seem to the carnal eye, are not only badges or tokens of our Christian profession, but *effectual* signs of God's grace¹—outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as *a means whereby we receive the same*, and a pledge to *assure* us thereof.² Here shall ye learn how, and how only, ye may abide together in a love which has no alloy and no reserve, no taint of earthliness or selfishness, when—remembering that for *your* family too, and for its sins ‘our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men and to suffer death upon the cross’³ ye come together to this altar to claim the benefits of that His inestimable sacri-

¹ Article on the Sacraments. ² The Catechism.

³ See the first collect for Good Friday.

fice; and when, being thus washed by His blood from all that can defile and separate you from each other, and being renewed with His Spirit of love, you cherish and preserve, and diffuse through all the channels of your daily life the grace thus received, by joining together in daily prayer to God in His name. Here shall ye learn how, being made one, even as the Father and the Son are one, your wedded life is become the image of the ineffable Union of those Blessed Persons; and how the authority of the husband and the obedience of the wife can continue true and entire, and yet co-exist with that perfect equality between them which married love demands, because ye represent that Union—in which perfect subordination and perfect equality meet together in the fellowship of the Father and the Son.¹ Here too

¹ The life of the Son of God was the life of obedience. Proud men cannot understand how He, who is one with the Father, yea, equal to the Father, should yet be obedient to the Father. They do not enter into this mystery of love—they cannot explain in their carnal hearts how the Almighty Father commands because the Son obeys, and the Son obeys because the Father commands; and how there would be no command if there were not obedience, and there would be no

shall ye find not only strength and wisdom in the day of prosperity, but also support and consolation in the day of adversity : when sickness and sorrow shall silence the song of joy and gladness, and when death shall sever branches never upon earth to be re-united to their parent trunk, and leave wounds therein never to be wholly healed, then will this holy sacrament remind you that His Body and Blood were given to preserve your bodies as well as souls unto everlasting life ; then will it assure you, as nothing else can do, that through the dear might of Him who died for you and your children death has no power over them or you, and can make no separation between you, seeing that both you and they are 'very members incorporate in the mystical body of the

obedience if there were not command. And they do not see how the Son came to carry on the same life here on earth which He had in heaven, to show forth this same blessed obedience in his human life and human death. But this is so, whether we understand it or not ; and therefore, by saying, 'I command these stones to be made bread,' He would have been giving up His privilege and glory as the Son of God ; which privilege and glory was in all things to obey—in all things to do His Father's will.'—Maurice's Sermons, pp. 160, 161.

Son of God, which is the blessed company of all faithful people,' both in earth and heaven.

In the passage of Tertullian which I have already referred to, and which is given in full as a motto to this book, we see the antiquity of this confirmation of wedlock by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that though the early Church might call marriage itself a sacrament, it was not in such a sense as made this confirmation unnecessary. The relation of the two,—how it is that 'in the writings of the Fathers all articles which are peculiar to Christian faith, all duties of religion containing that which sense or natural reason cannot of itself discern, are most commonly named sacraments,'¹—is beautifully and satisfactorily explained in the following words: 'But there was one great blessing upon this state of mind [of the early Christians] which.....was afterwards converted into a curse. That which is the commonest element for the sustenance of man, —that which is the greatest inspirer of his

¹ Hooker, Ecc. Pol. V, l. [2.] 'Yet they continually speak of two great sacraments.' Palmer's Orig. Liturg. II. 198.

animal energies and life,—having been consecrated into the symbols of a high mystery, every thing else in nature assumed a sacred and sacramental character; every thing spoke to them of a Being who had stooped to take their nature upon Him; every common thing seemed to have been touched by the Divine Enchanter, and converted into gold. There was no notion of defining the number of such sacraments, far less of raising any of them to an equality with those to which they all owed their beauty and graciousness. Still it would be most likely that the most important crises and institutions of human life should seem to be endowed with a peculiar glory,—above all, the sacred institution of marriage, throughout the bible the symbol of the union of Christ and His members, established, as they believed, for the very end of shadowing it forth,—would almost of course, be regarded as a mystery, and in some sort as a key to all others.¹ The curse spoken of in the first sentence of this

¹ Maurice's Kingdom of Christ, Vol. I, pp. 209, 210,
1st edit.

extract is thus explained by the writer a little further on, when describing the darkness and confusion of the Church in the times just preceding the Reformation :—‘ men exalted the events and conditions of their own lives, which, in the former age, had been glorified by the two sacraments, to a level with them ; and began accurately to define how many of these conditions are deserving of this mysterious honour. Thus on the one hand the sacraments were degraded still further by earthly illustrations and interpretations ; and the robe of divinity which is meant to be spread over all life and all human nature, was formally confined to certain portions of each, the rest being left cold and naked.’¹ I have endeavoured to show how our Church preserves to us all the blessing while she secures us from the curse—how she brings marriage into the closest and most lively union with both the sacraments, though she declares that ‘ matrimony is not to be counted for a sacrament o the Gospel, and has not like nature of a sacre

¹ The same, pp. 221, 222.

ment with Baptism and the Lord's Supper,'¹ and thus by upholding the peculiar right of these to that name, secures to wedlock and all other states and conditions of human life a dignity which they cannot retain but by help of something distinct from, and above, themselves. A farther light of no little value will be found in the following passage from Coleridge. There was given to him (perhaps as hardly to any other man) the love of Truth, and the power to seek it, *for its own sake*, and not for the sake of its results, while his humble practical faith as a Christian man enabled him to apply the whole force of his mighty intellect as reverently as boldly to the holiest subjects: and therefore it is important to have his confirmation, which is certainly derived from grounds of pure reason, of a doctrine which the Church teaches authoritatively, and which the masters of the laws of ecclesiastical polity show us to be in harmony with all her other doctrines and to bear like good fruits with them through her whole history. He says,

¹ Article on the Sacraments.

' It might be a mean of preventing many unhappy marriages if the youth of both sexes had it early impressed upon their minds, that marriage contracted between Christians is a true or perfect symbol or mystery; that is, the actualizing faith being supposed to exist in the receivers, it is an outward sign co-essential with that which it signifies, or a living part of that, the whole of which it represents. Marriage therefore, in the Christian sense (*Ephesians v, 22—33*), as symbolical of the union of the soul with Christ the Mediator, and with God through Christ, is perfectly a sacramental ordinance, and not retained by the reformed churches as one of the sacraments, for two reasons; first that the sign is not distinctive of the Church of Christ, and the ordinance not peculiar, nor owing its origin to the Gospel dispensation; secondly, that it is not of universal obligation, nor a means of grace enjoined on all Christians. In other and plainer words, marriage does not contain in itself an open profession of Christ, and it is not a sacrament of the Church, but only of certain individual members of the Church. It is evident, how-

ever, that neither of these reasons affect or diminish the religious nature and dedicative force of the marriage vow, or detract from the solemnity in the apostolic declaration : *This is a great mystery.*¹

XV.

CONCLUSION.

For a reason not altogether dissimilar from that which I have assigned for the preceding quotation, I now sum up—how fully the reader may judge—the views of the Church which I have endeavoured to elucidate in the foregoing pages, in the words of a puritan divine :—

‘ You that are married persons, see yourselves in this double glass, of Paradise, and the Trinity. By these glasses dress yourselves in your loveliness and loves one for another. St. Paul saith that marriage is honourable among all, or in all things. A type hath a double honour ; the figure which is shadowy, the truth which is a substantial glory. Husbands and wives preserve the

¹ Aids to Reflection, pp. 28, 29, note.

honour of your state at least in the shadowy part. Bear the figure of the ever glorious Trinity, whose type you are, by a moral beauty, truth, purity, sweetness, which are the gold and precious metal in the ring of this love-union. This will make marriage an earthly paradise. But rest not in this. You will find a serpent here, that will quickly poison all your sweets and change your flowers into thorns, if you pass not through the earthly into the heavenly paradise. Then you wear the marriage-crown in truth, when that Spirit, which is the band of love between the Father and the Son, is the eternal band of divine love between you also ; when you also make your marriage-bed in the bosom of the Holy Ghost. What joys, what an immortal offspring is born of those lovers, where the love-fellowship of these below, and the sacred love-fellowship of the Blessed Trinity above, descend and ascend one into another, where they mingle themselves universally !¹

¹ Sterry's Sermons : 1st posthumous Vol. pp. 309, 310.

Reader, I have finished—not indeed all that might be fitly said, but—that small part which I could attempt to handle: and now I leave thee to meditate in the silence of thine own spirit, and so to rise from the consideration of the several details which I have successively pointed out, to the infinite life and meaning of the whole, there to drink deeply for thyself of the overflowing river of prayer and praise and holy joy. When thou visitest some new scene of God's creation, where the fast-standing hills and the deep calm lake, the solemn woods and the smiling meadow, are joined in one fair prospect, thou dost not refuse the aid of the peasant guide who can shew thee the mountain path which leads to the vantage ground of view, yet when this is gained thou gladly partest with him that thou mayest behold and take in the vision of delight with no disturbing presence: when thou enterest some cathedral or minster, thou willingly takest in thy hand that slight book of names and dates which is offered thee, and then, when it has given thee its information, turnest from it to contemplate with undivided regard

those God-like works—God-like because the works of man made in the image of God and breathed into by His Spirit—which spread themselves in order before thee : and if here too, at the entrance of this paradise of nature, this consecrated temple of beautiful design and workmanship, which God our Father, calling men to be fellow-workers with Him, has, of His infinite love to our land, planted and dedicated upon English ground—if here some one of my countrymen or countrywomen, but chiefly that bride and bridegroom for whose dear sakes my task was undertaken, can find like humble guidance, like brief information, I now gladly depart from their presence and their thoughts, having finished a service which acceptance all too richly repays.

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## APPENDIX.

## [ A ]

The counterpart of that portion of the Prayer Book which begins with the office of baptism, and includes all the occasional services, was (with the exception of the offices which only a bishop could perform) called the *Manual* in the churches of Salisbury and York before the reformation; and another name sometimes given to the same services in the middle ages was the *Institution*.<sup>1</sup> And when in Henry VIIIth's reign the convocation took the first steps towards that revision and translation of the old formularies which at last ended in the completion of our present Prayer Book, they first published (in 1537) a book, 'called *The godly and pious institution of a Christen Man*, containing a declaration of the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Sacraments, &c., which book was again published A.D. 1540, and 1543, with corrections and alterations, under the title of *A necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christen Man*.' In the next year the litanies were translated

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<sup>1</sup> Palmer's *Origines Liturg.* vol. II, p. 166.

into English, ' and finally, in the year 1545, the king's *Primer* came forth, wherein were contained, amongst other things, the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, Venite, Te Deum, and other hymns and collects in English ; and several of them in the same version in which we now use them.'<sup>1</sup> I have given these several facts that the reader may judge whether there is not historical ground for believing that in old times, when our fathers were using the services which we still use in our common worship, they were possessed by that idea of them which I have endeavoured to set forth in the text to which this note refers. And for the fuller illustration of that idea I have selected the following from among several similar passages to be found in the works of the same writer. I give it for its own worth, and because it is now out of print, but also because I am indebted for all that I have myself said upon the subject, (as indeed for more than half the thoughts in this book) to this my honoured friend ; and I all the more gladly thus bring the copy into comparison with the original, because I know that the pale reflected rays of the attendant planet must cease to shine in the presence of the sun from which it borrows its light :—

' Believing the Church to be a kingdom, which each nation, from the time of its conversion to Christianity had become bound to acknowledge, bound, I mean, for the sake of its own stability and existence ; they<sup>2</sup> started at once with the assumption that every English child was to be received into this kingdom by Baptism, and was to be treated as a member of it. It was as much admitted by this rite into Christ's heavenly kingdom of the church, as it was by birth into Christ's earthly

<sup>1</sup> Wheatly on the Book of Common Prayer : Appendix to Introductory Discourse.

<sup>2</sup> The Reformers.

kingdom of the nation. It was not cognizant of the privileges belonging to either state, no, not even of the lower, but still mighty privilege of being the member of a family,—but to each of these blessings were its teachers, confiding in God's promises and help, to awaken its inward eye, as the outward opened upon the face of its parents,—upon the hills and vallies of its native land,—upon its towns and castles, which testified that it was a land which the Lord God had cared for,—upon its churches, which spoke of its connexion with the mysterious and the invisible. The silent education under the eye of its parents, God's ordinance for calling forth the *affections*,—the stern sway of schoolmasters, his ordinance for awakening the *conscience*,—were alike an induction into the full enjoyment of those higher ordinances assumed in both, which showed that the awfulness of disobedience is never so great as when it is committed against a perfectly loving Father. Baptism lay at the commencement of this great scheme of spiritual education; the Divine declaration of the state of the creature before God, and of its relation to its fellow men, teaching the teacher with what an awful subject he has to deal, what mighty power he has at his command, for what a glorious end he is continually to be working; holding forth to the learner an unfailing hope of ever increasing life, and peace, and knowledge, of which even in his pupilage he enjoys the foretaste, of which only by the sacrifice of self-will he may obtain the fruition. Child, and boy, and man, are alike instructed that they have an interest in this kingdom; that all the acts of their life can only be interpreted in relation to it; can be justly performed only while they keep it in remembrance. They are surrounded by it each morning when they awake; they are to rise and give thanks that it is theirs by every title of conquest and inheritance; to

confess how little they have cared for its privileges ; to plead the assurance which experience has taught them, that they shall fall from all its glories, unless they be upheld with fresh strength that day to receive the promised supply of pardon, encouragement, experience, wisdom, confidence, enjoyment. This kingdom compasses them in as they lie down at night, to bear witness of another day of continued unstartling miracles ; of bodily and spiritual nourishment supplied, as much from heaven as if they saw the white flakes on the ground, and went out for the first time to ask what is it, and to inspire the prayer of hope and fear, that the Presence which has been with them through the day, the Angel of the Covenant, who has permitted the cloud to shelter them from the sun's heat, may be a light round about them in the night season. Every act reminds them that they are brought into this kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and love. A marriage cannot be celebrated unless the King be present, to turn the water of an earthly ordinance into the wine of a spiritual mystery ; he must be with them on their sick beds ; he must go with them to death and the grave, in which he has been before them. Such was the idea of our Reformers, and in expressing this idea, they found they had no occasion to invent, they had only to purify. A kingdom they believed had been set up in the world ages before. Its subjects had been taught to express their wants, their thanksgivings, their hopes in every crisis of sorrow and joy,—in these, men had found solace, and hope, and inspiration, excitements to their devotion when they were sluggish ; sympathy in it which encouraged, not cramped, their own aspirations when they were cheerful; these, reminded them that Christ was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and that there was a golden chord of feelings binding

generation to generation. Surely, to invent some cold, and correct, and scholastic formulas of devotional propriety,—surely, to leave it to the chance of individual feeling creating an expression for its own solitary and selfish wants, would not have been so good a way of providing life for that age, strength for those that were to come, as to remove from the ancient forms, whatever impurities had crept into them, through the notions and fashions of particular periods, and to give them a permanence which should counteract more effectually than any other measure could, the effect of similar corruptions hereafter, (sure to steal in by means of improvised prayers), upon the mind and theology of the nation. But that which crowned all these services and acts, as the service of Baptism lay at the foundation of them all, and that without which all the rest are unintelligible, is the service of Communion. The prevalence and dignity which our Reformers gave to this word, above all that had been heretofore used to designate the Lord's Supper, though not to the disparagement of any one of them, is a help in interpreting the nature of our services, and as I conceive, the whole idea of Christianity, which seems to me unspeakably precious. It at once lifts the mind to this one sublime and awful thought, that Communion with God in the largest and fullest sense of that word, is not an instrument of attaining some higher end, but is itself the end to which He is leading His creatures, and after which His creatures, in all kingdoms, and nations, and languages,—by all their schemes of religion, by all their studies of philosophy, by art, by science, by politics, by watching, by weeping, by struggling, by submitting, by wisdom, by folly, in the camp and in the closet, in poverty and in riches, in honour and in shame, in health and in sickness, are secretly longing and crying, and without

which they cannot be satisfied. For all are labouring af  
good or happiness of some kind or other, and all testify  
their acts, if not by their words, that this good must be  
some sense or other out of themselves; and all testify tk  
this good must some way or other be connected with the  
selves, and that they must become capable of participating  
it. Wherefore there is not a solid pursuit or a vain drea  
recorded in the history of man, or felt by him now, or th  
shall be experienced hereafter, but points to this one obje  
and tells him he must achieve that, in order that he may :  
tain any of the subordinate objects which he also desires, a  
must labour after.'—MAURICE'S *Kingdom of Christ*, Vol.  
pp. 255—259. 1st Edition.

## [ B ]

By the obliging permission of Mr. Moxon, the publisher  
the *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Col*  
*Ridge*, I reprint from that work a 'Letter to a Young Lad  
in which the principles which should guide a woman in t  
choice of a husband, are set forth by this great poet and phil  
osopher :—

*'Letter to a Young Lady.'*

'If there be any one subject which it especially concerns  
young woman to understand, both in itself generally, and i  
its application to her own particular habits and circumstance  
IT IS THAT OF MARRIAGE ; and if there be any one subje  
of more perplexing delicacy than any other to advise a your  
woman about, above all for one of a different sex, and of x  
marked inequality in respect of age, however the attempt ms  
seem authorised by intimacy and nearness of kindred ; if the

be one that at once attracts by its importance and repels by its difficulty, IT IS THAT OF MARRIAGE. To both sexes, indeed, it is a state of deep and awful interest, and to enter into it without proportionate forethought is in both alike an act of folly and self-degradation. But in a woman, if she have sense and sensibility enough to deserve the name, it is an act tantamount to suicide—for it is a state which, once entered into, fills the *whole* sphere of a woman's moral and personal being, her enjoyments and her duties, dismissing none, adding many, and modifying all. Even those duties (if such there be) which it may seem to<sup>1</sup> leave behind, it does but *transfer*; say rather, it re-imposes and re-consecrates them under yet dearer names (though names more dear than those of daughter and sister it is not easy to imagine); at all events, with obligations additionally binding on her conscience, because undertaken by an act of her own free will. A woman—mark me! in using that term I still have before my mind the *idea* of womanhood, and suppose the individual to possess its characteristic constituents—a woman in a single state may be happy and may be miserable; but *most* happy, *most* miserable—these are epithets which, with rare exceptions, belong exclusively to a wife. The tree of *full* life, and that “whose mortal taste brings death” into the heart, these, my dear ——, grow in the probationary Eden of courtship alone. To the many of both sexes I am well aware this Eden of matrimony is but a kitchen-garden, a thing of profit and convenience, in an even temperature between *indifference* and *liking*; where the beds, bordered with *thrift*, reject all higher attractions than the homely charms of *marygold* and *penny-royal*, or whatever else is good to boil in

<sup>1</sup> Too often, I fear, on the supposed sanction of the *mistranslated* and still worse *interpreted* text, Genesis II, 29. [?]

the pot, or to make the pot boil ; or if there be aught of richer fragrance and more delicate hues, it is put or suffered there not for the *blossom* but for the pod. But this, my dear \_\_\_\_\_, is neither the soil, climate, nor aspect, in which *your* " heart's-ease" or your " herbs of grace" would bloom or burgeon. To be happy in marriage life, nay (unless you marry with the prospect of sinking into a lower state of moral feeling, and of gradually quenching in yourself all hope and all aspiration that looks beyond animal comforts and the outside shows of worldly respectability), in order not to be miserable, *you* must have a *soul-mate* as well as a *house* or a *yoke-mate*; *you* must have a husband whom before the altar, making yourself at that moment distinctly conscious of the presence of the Almighty God to whom you appeal, you can safely, that is, according to your confident belief, grounded on sufficient opportunities of observation, *conscientiously* vow to love, *honour*, and *respect*. With what disgust would you not turn from a sordid, with what horror would you not recoil from a contagious or infectious garment offered to you ? you would not suffer it to come near your *skin*. And would you surrender your *person*, would you blend your whole personality, as far as God has put it in your power to do so, all that you call " I " —soul, body, and estate—with one, the contagion of whose principles, the infection or sordidness of whose habits and conversation you would have to guard against in behalf of your own soul ; and the insidious influence of which on the tone and spirit of your thoughts, feelings, objects, and unconscious tendencies and manners, would be as the atmosphere in which you lived ! Or were the man's character merely negative in these respects, were he only incapable of understanding the development of your moral being, including all those minor

duties and objects of quiet pursuit and enjoyment which constitute the moral *taste*: were he only indifferent to the interest you felt for his and your own salvation, and for the conditions of your re-union in the world to come—still it would be a *benumbing* influence, and the heart may be *starved* where it is neither stabbed nor poisoned. God said that it was not well for the human being to be alone; to be what *we* ought to be, we need support, help, communion in good. What, then, if instead of a helpmate we take an obstacle, a daily counteraction? But the mere want of what God has rendered necessary or most desirable for us is itself an obstacle. Virtue sickens in the air of the marshes, loaded with poisonous effluvia; but even where the air is merely deficient in the due quantity of its vital element, and where there is too little, though what there is may be faultless, human virtue lives but a *panting* and anxious life. For as to a young woman's marrying in the hope of reforming the man's principles, you will join with me in smiling at the presumption, or more probably the *pretext*; as if the man was likely to appreciate as of very serious importance a danger which the wife had not feared to risk on so slender a chance, or be persuaded by her to feel as hateful the very qualities which she had taken to her bosom, as a few weeds in a nosegay that she might pick out at leisure.

'Well (you will perhaps reply), you would have convinced me, if I had not been convinced before, of the misery attendant on an unfit choice, and the criminal folly of a rash and careless one. But by what marks am I to distinguish the suitable from the unsuitable? What are the criteria, or at least the most promising signs of a man likely to prove a good husband to a good wife? And, as far as you can judge from your knowledge of my character, principles, and temper, likely to

find his happiness in me, and to make me happy and desire to be so? For perfection can be expected on neither side.

' Most true; and whilst the defects are both in their and their degree within the bounds of that imperfection which is common to all in our present state, the best and wisest that a wife can adopt, is to regard even faulty trifles as self-faults in herself, and yet to bear with the same or equivalent faults as trifles in her husband. If the fault is removable well and good; if not, it is a speck in a diamond—a jewel in the marriage ring with the speck downmost. But it is one thing to choose for the companion of our life a troubled with occasional headaches or indigestions, and another to run into the arms of *inveterate gout*, or consumption (though the consequent hectic should render the countenance still more winning and beautiful), or of hemiplegia, that is palsy on one side. For, as you will see that I am speaking figuratively, and under the names of bodily complaints really thinking, and meaning you to think, of moral and intellectual defects and diseases, I have hazarded the word "*hemiplegia*"; as I can conceive no more striking appropriate image or symbol of an individual with one half of his being, that is, his person, manners, and circumstances well and as it should be, while the other and inestimably precious half is but half alive, blighted and insensate. For the prevention of the perilous mistake, into which a sonal prepossession is too apt to seduce the young and more agreeable, and females more often, perhaps, than males, from the gentleness of their sex, the mistake of looking through the diminishing end of the glass and confounding vices and foibles,—I know no better way than by attempting to answer the questions, which I have supposed you to put, over

viz.—What are the marks, &c., first, generally, and, secondly, in particular application to yourself? In the latter I can of course only speak conjecturally, except as your outward circumstances and relative duties are concerning; in all else you must be both querist and respondent. But the former, the knowledge of which will be no mean assistance to you in solving the latter for your own satisfaction, I think I can answer distinctly and clearly; and with this, therefore, we will begin.

' You would have reason to regard your sex affronted, if I supposed it necessary to warn any good woman against open viciousness in a lover, or avowed indifference to the great principles of moral obligation, religious, social, or domestic.

' By "religious" I do not *here* mean matters of opinion or differences of belief in points where good and wise men have agreed to differ. Religious (in my present use of the word), is but morality in reference to all that is *permanent* and *imperishable*, God and our souls, for instance; and morality is religion in its application to individuals, circumstances, the various relations and spheres in which we *happen* to be placed; in short, to all that is contingent and transitory, and passes away, leaving no abiding trace but the conscience of having or not having done our duty in each.

' I would fain, if the experience of life would permit me, think it no less superfluous to dissuade a woman of common foresight and information, from encouraging the addresses of one, however unobjectionable or even desirable in all other respects, who, she knew, or had good reason to believe, was by acquired or hereditary constitution affected by those mournful complaints, which, it is well known, are ordinarily transmitted to the offspring, to one or more, or all. But, alas! it often happens, that afflictions of this nature are united with the

highest worth, and the most winning attractions of head, heart, and person ; nay, that they often add to the native good qualities of the individual a tenderness, a sensibility, a quickness of perception, and a vivacity of principle, that cannot but conciliate an interest in behalf of the possessor in the affections of a woman, strong in proportion to the degree in which she is herself characterised by the same excellencies. Manly virtues and manly sense with feminine manners without effeminacy, form such an assemblage, a *tout ensemble* so delightful to the womanly heart, that it demands a hard, a cruel struggle to find in any ground of objection an effective counterpoise, a decisive negative. Yet the struggle must be made, and must end in the decisive and, if possible, the preventive "no;" or all claims to reason and conscience, and to that distinctive seal and impress of divinity on womanhood, the *maternal* soul, must be abandoned. The probable misfortunes attendant on the early death of the head of the family are the least fearful of the consequences that may rationally, and therefore *ought*, morally, to be expected from such a choice. The *mother's* anguish, the *father's* heart-wasting self-reproach, the recollection of that innocent lost, the sight of this darling suffering, the dread of the future,—in fine, the conversion of Heaven's choicest blessings into sources of anguish and subjects of remorse. I have seen all this in more than one miserable, and *most* miserable because amiable and affectionate couple, and have seen that the sound constitution of one parent has not availed against the taint on the other. Would to God the picture I have here exhibited were as imaginary in itself as its exhibition is unnecessary and the reality of improbable occurrence for *you*.<sup>1</sup>

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*I It is* with unfeigned reluctance that I take on myself to express a dissent

'Dismissing, therefore, as taken for granted or altogether inapplicable, all objections grounded on gross and palpable unfitness for a state of moral and personal union and life-long interdependence,—and less than this is not marriage, whether the unfitness result from constitutional or from moral defect or derangement; and with these, and only not *quite* so bad, dismissing too the objections from want of competence, on both sides, in worldly means, proportional to their former rank and habits; and yet what worse or more degradingly selfish (yea, the very dregs and sediment of selfishness, after the more refined and *human* portion of it, the sense of *self-interest*, has been drawn off), what worse, I repeat, can be said of the beasts of the field, without reflection, without forethought, of whom and for whose offspring nature has taken the responsibility

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from much that Coleridge asserts in this eloquent paragraph. A familiar letter must not be judged of as though it were an elaborate treatise, and this consideration would of itself make it not unreasonable that (if the case seemed to demand it) we should take with some limitation and qualification, the opinions which are here given peremptorily, and without such restriction. But while I remember well that I (like all my countrymen in this day) owe it to Coleridge's teaching if I have any clear knowledge of the distinction between the dictates of reason and conscience, and the prudential calculations of the understanding, still I must, in all humility, and with profoundest reverence for his great name, say that he seems to me to have here himself abandoned that distinction, and put duty and prudence together just in the way which towards the end of this letter he so finely condemns. The question spoken of in this paragraph seems to me to be clearly *not* a question of reason and conscience primarily, but of prudence. If so, there is no universal *law* which can be laid down upon it, but each case must be judged of by itself, and in reference to its own circumstances, though, when it has been so judged of, it is doubtless required both by reason and conscience, that the prudential conclusion should be maintained. And the proper judges of this, as of all other *prudential* matters relating to marriage, are, first and chiefly, the parents of the woman, and then the man and his parents; but surely the less the woman calculates chances and consequences on this or any other subject the better.—E. S.

upon herself:—putting all these aside, as too obvious to require argument or exposition, I will now pass to those marks which too frequently *are* overlooked, however obvious in themselves they may be; but which *ought* to be *looked for*, and *looked after* by every woman who has ever reflected on the words “my future husband” with more than *girlish* feelings and fancies. And if the *absence* of these *marks* in an individual *furnishes* a decisive reason for the rejection of his addresses, there are others the *presence* of which forms a sufficient ground for hesitation, and I will begin with an instance.

‘When you hear a man making exceptions to any fundamental law of duty in favour of some particular pursuit or passion, and considering the dictates of honour as neither more nor less than motives of selfish prudence in respect of character; in other words, as conventional and ever changing regulations, the breach of which will, if detected, *black-ball* the offender, and send him to Coventry in that particular rank and class of society of which he was born or has become a member; when, instead of giving instantaneous and unconditional obedience to the original voice from within, a man substitutes for this, and listens after, the mere echo of the voice from without; his knowledge, I mean of what is commanded by *fashion* and enforced by the foreseen consequences of non-compliance on his worldly reputation (thus I myself heard a buckish clergyman, a clerical Nimrod, at Salisbury, avow, that he would *cheat his own father in a horse*), then I say, that to smile, or shew yourselves *smiling-angry*, as if a tap with your fan was a sufficient punishment, and a “for shame! you don’t think so, I am sure,” or “you should not *say so*,” a sufficient reproof, would be an ominous symptom either of your own laxity of moral principle and deadness to true honour, and the

unspeakable *contemptibleness* of this gentlemanly counterfeit of it, or of your abandonment to a blind passion kindled by superficial advantages and outside agreeables, and blown and fuelled by that most base, and yet frequent thought, "one must not be over nice, or a woman may say No till no one asks her to say Yes." And what does this amount to (with all the other pretty common places, as, "What right have *I* to expect an angel in the shape of a man?" &c. &c.) but the plain confession, "I *want* to be married, the better the man the luckier for me; I have made up my mind to be the mistress of a family; in short, I *want* to be married!"

'Under this head you may safely place all the knowing principles of action, so often and so boastingly confessed by your clever fellows—"I take care of *number* one; hey, neighbour: what say you?"—"Each for himself, and God for us all: that's my maxim." And likewise, as the very same essentially, though in a more dignified and seemly form, the principle of determining whether a thing is right or wrong, by its supposed consequences.

'There are men who let their life pass away without a single effort to do good, either to friend or neighbour, to their country or their religion, on the strength of the question—"What *good* will it do?" But woe to the man who is incapable of feeling, that the greatest possible good he can do for himself or for others, is to *do his duty* and to leave the consequences to God. But it will be answered, "How can we ascertain that it is our duty but by weighing the probable *consequences*?" Besides, no one can act without *motives*; and all motives must at last have respect to the agent's own self-interest, and that is the reason why Religion is so useful, because it carries on our self-interest beyond the grave!"'

'O my dear.....! so many worthy persons, who really, though unconsciously, both act from, and are actuated by, far nobler impulses, are educated to talk in this language, that I dare not expose the folly, turpitude, immorality, and *irreligion* of this system, without premising the necessity of trying to discover, previous to your forming a fixed opinion respecting the true character of the individuals from whom *you* may have heard declarations of this kind, whether the sentiments proceed from the tongue only, or at worst, from a misinstructed understanding, or are the native growth of his heart.

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‘S. T. C.’

*Letters. &c.* vol. II, pp. 86—101.

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[ C ]

I owe to the friend, to whom I have already acknowledged my debts, this distinction, marked by the two names, *Chevalier* or *Ritter*—the man on the war-horse, and *Knight*—the servant (*knecht*): a distinction which will appear fanciful or unimportant to no one who has drunk into the spirit of the tales and chronicles in which the age of chivalry is portrayed, and which has the greater interest for us Englishmen because we alone chose the latter name, and because we can connect therewith the fact that history and romance agree in awarding the palm of chivalry to Britain; the chevalier of France or Spain could equal the knight of England as little in prowess as in courtesy.<sup>1</sup> Nor will such an one need that I should prove

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<sup>1</sup> For proof of this the reader is referred to Mill's *History of Chivalry*.

that this character of the Servant of all men was the ideal which the true Knight set before himself for contemplation and realization, though it is perhaps worth while to say a few words to disabuse the minds of those who fancy that knights-errant were only the dandies and coxcombs of their day, and that they had that sort of gentility which prides itself upon despising all that are not born into their clique. It is not to be denied that these knights, being but men, had all the passions and prejudices which men have still, nor that in those half-savage and half-heathen times the various bad feelings which still taint our several social relations were even under less strong or habitual controul than now; but he is a poor philosopher who thinks that the defects of an age can ever be its characteristics, as he would be a poor sculptor who drew his ideal of the human figure from the clumsy and ill-shaped men, because they are so many more than the perfectly formed. Take for instance Froissart's story of the taking of Calais. It was not because Edward was a knight, and Eustace St. Pierre and his fellows only burgesses, that he ordered them to be put to death, but because he allowed his passion and desire of revenge to get the better of his knightly spirit: and accordingly we find that Sir Walter of Manny, himself one of 'the sovereigns of chivalry,' as Froissart says elsewhere, remonstrated with the king in words that showed how unknightly he thought the deed, (to which he applies the term *villainy*, which always means the entire contrary to *gentleness* or *knight-hood*, in the language of those times), and how true his respect and sympathy for the burgesses. But I will give the story as it stands:—

'After the French king was thus departed from Sangate, they within Calais saw well how their succour failed them, for

the which they were in great sorrow. Then they desired so much their captain, Sir John of Vyen, that he went to the walls of the town, and made a sign to speak with some person of the host. When the king heard thereof, he sent thither Sir Walter of Manny and Sir Basset: then Sir John of Vyen said to them, Sirs, ye be right valiant knights in deeds of arms, and ye know well how the king, my master, hath sent me and other to this town, and commanded us to keep it to his behoof, in such wise that we take no blame, nor to him no damage; and we have done all that lieth in our power. Now our succours hath failed us, and we be so sore strained that we have not to live withall, but that we must all die, or else enrage for famine, without the noble and gentle king of yours will take mercy on us: the which to do we require you to desire him to have pity on us, and to let us go and depart as we be, and let him take the town and castle, and all the goods that be therein, the which is great abundance. Then Sir Walter of Manny said, Sir, we know somewhat of the intention of the king our master, for he hath shewed it unto us; surely know for truth it is not his mind that ye nor they within the town should depart so, for it is his will that ye all should put yourselves into his pure will to ransom all such as please him, and to put to death such as he list: for they of Calais hath done him such contraries and despites, and hath caused him to dispend so much good, and lost so many of his men, that he is sore grieved against them. Then the captain said, Sir, this is too hard a matter to us; *we are here within a small sort of knights and squires*, who hath truly served the king our master as well as ye serve yours in like case, and we have endured much pain and unease: *but we shall yet endure as much pain as ever knights did rather than consent that the worst lad in the town should have any more evil than*

*the greatest of us all*: therefore, Sir, we pray you that of your humility, yet that ye will go and speak to the king of England, and desire him to have pity of us, for we trust in him so much gentleness that by the grace of God his purpose shall change. Sir Walter of Manny and Sir Baasset returned to the king, and declared to him all that had been said. The king said he would none otherwise, but that they should yield them up simply to his pleasure. Then Sir Walter said, Sir, saving your displeasure in this, ye may be in the wrong, for ye shall give by this an evil example: if ye send any of us your servants into any fortress, we will not be very glad to go if ye put any of them in the town to death after they be yielded, for in like-wise they will deal with us if the case fell like: the which words divers other lords that were there present sustained and maintained. Then the king said, Sirs, I will not be alone against you all; therefore, Sir Walter of Manny ye shall go and say to the captain, that all the grace that he shall find now in me is, that they let six of the chief burgesses of the town come out bare-headed, bare-footed, and bare-legged, and in their shirts, with halters about their necks, with the keys of the town and castle in their hands, and let them six yield themself purely to my will, and the residue I will take to mercy. Then Sir Walter returned, and found Sir John of Vyen still on the wall, abiding for an answer: then Sir Walter shewed him all the grace he could get of the king. Well, quoth Sir John, Sir, I require you tarry here a certain space till I go into the town, and shew this to the commons of the town, who sent me hither. Then Sir John went unto the market-place and sounded the common bell; then, incontinent, men and women assembled there; then the captain made report of all that he had done; and said, Sirs, it will be none otherwise, therefore now take

advice, and make a short answer. Then all the people began to weep and to make such sorrow, that there was not so hard a heart if they had seen them but that would have had great pity of them ; *the captain himself wept piteously*. At last, the most rich burgess of all the town, called Ewstaoe of Saint Peters, rose up and said openly, Sirs, great and small, great mischief it should be to suffer to die such people as be in this town, either by famine or otherwise, when there is a mean to save them : I think he or they should have great merit of our Lord God that might keep them from such mischief: as for my part, I have so good trust in our Lord God, that if I die in the quarrel to save the residue, that God would pardon me ; wherefore to save them I will be the first to put my life in jeopardy. When he had thus said, every man worshipped<sup>1</sup> him, and divers kneeled down at his feet with sore weeping and sore sighs. Then another honest burgess rose and said, I will keep company with my gossip Ewstace: he was called John Dayre. Then rose up Jaques of Wyssant, who was rich in goods and heritage ; he said also, that he would hold company with his two cousins in likewise: so did Peter of Wyssant his brother and then rose two others ; they said they would do the same. Then they went and apparelled themselves as the king desire. Then the captain went with them to the gate : there was great lamentation made of men, women, and childrén, at their departing. Then the gate was opened, and he issued out with six burgesses, and closed the gate again, so that they were between the gate and the barriers. Then he said to Sir W<sup>t</sup> of Manny, Sir, I deliver here to you, as captain of Calais the whole consent of all the people of the town, these six

<sup>1</sup> This use of the word *worship* will illustrate its meaning in the Mass Service.

gesses ; and I swear to you truly, that they be and were to-day most honourable, rich, and most notable burgesses of all the town of Calais ; wherefore, gentle knight, I require you pray the king to have mercy on them, that they die not. Quoth Sir Walter, I cannot say what the king will do, but I shall do for them the best I can. Then the barriers were opened, the six burgesses went towards the king, and the captain entered again into the town. When Sir Walter presented these burgesses to the king, they kneeled down, and held up their hands and said, Gentle king, behold here we six, who were burgesses of Calais, and great merchants : we have brought to you the keys of the town and of the castle, and we submit ourself clearly into your will and pleasure, to save the residue of the people of Calais who have suffered great pain : Sir, we beseech your grace to have mercy and pity upon us through your high nobless. *Then all the earls and barons*, and other that were there, *went for pity*. The king looked felly on them, for greatly he hated the people of Calais, for the great damage and displeasures they had done him on the sea before. Then he commanded their heads to be stricken off : then every man required the king for mercy, but he would hear no man in that behalf. *Then Sir Walter of Manny said, Oh noble king, for God's sake refrain your courage ; ye have the name of sovereign nobless, therefore now do not a thing THAT SHOULD BLEMISH YOUR RENOWN, nor to GIVE CAUSE TO SOME TO SPEAK OF YOU VILAINY ; EVERY MAN WILL SAY IT IS A GREAT CRUELTY to put to death such honest persons, who by their own wills put themselves into your grace to save their company.* Then the king wryed away from him, and commanded to send for the hangman, and said, they of Calais had caused many of my men to be slain, wherefore these shall be slain in likewise. Then the

queen, being great with child, kneeled down, and sore weeping said, Ah gentle Sir, sith I passed the sea in great peril, I have desired nothing of you; therefore now I humbly require you, in the honour of the Son of the Virgin Mary, and for the love of me, that ye will take mercy of these six burgesses. The king beheld the queen, and stood still in a study a space, and then said, Ah Dame, I would ye had been as now in some other place, ye make such request to me that I cannot deny you; wherefore I give them to you, to do your pleasure with them. Then the queem caused them to be brought into her chamber, and made the halters to be taken from their necks, and caused them to be new clothed, and gave them their dinner at their leisure; and then she gave each of them six nobles, and made them to be brought out of the host in safeguard, and set at their liberty.<sup>1</sup> I suppose I need hardly observe, that any historical doubts as to this story cannot affect its accuracy as a picture of the spirit and manners of the times.

Take again Chaucer's description of the Knight:

A knight there was, and that a worthy man,  
 That fro the timé that he first began  
 To ride out, he loved chivalrie,  
 Truth and honoür, freedom and courtesie.  
 Full worthy was he in his lordes war,  
 And thereto had he ridden, no man far,  
 As well in Christendom as in Heathenesse,  
 And ever honoured for his worthinesse :—

Then, after recounting the various proofs of his *worth* (or

<sup>1</sup> *Syr John Froissart's Chronycles.. translated out of Frenche into our maternall Englyshe tonge, by John Bouchier, knyght, lorde Berners: at the commaundement of our most kynghe redouited soveraygne lorde kyng Henrye the viii., &c. The firste volum, chaptre celvi.: reprinted in 1812.*

valour) from the time he first began *to ride* out, Chaucer proceeds—

And though that he was worthy he was wise,  
And of his port as meek as is a maid.  
He never yet no villainy ne said  
In all his life *unto no manner wight*.  
He was a very perfect gentle knight.

And so of the knight's son and squire, we read,

Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,

which must refer to his general demeanour—not to his equals but—to the company he was with, of whom hardly any can have been of gentle birth.

Neither can I find that Amadis or Palmerin, Launcelot or Tristram, the Red Cross knight or Sir Guyon, Froda or Sir Folko of Mountfauco, never exhibited any of this hatred or contempt for those who were not of gentle blood like themselves, still less that they thought it a part of their knightly character so to do. I am the more desirous to set the age and tales of chivalry in their true light because I think the reverence and love for them to be among the chief means of cultivating that true spirit of a Christian gentleman which it has been my endeavour to show the importance of in reference to marriage. It seems to me that chivalry romances and poems ought to be put into the hands of all boys, before the time has past when they can enjoy such things with an imagination not yet checked by the questionings and calculations of the understanding. Not that this should be substituted for any other part of their education, nor that it should form any large portion of it, but that they should have some admission into those fields, there to browse 'at their own sweet will.' I hesitate to speak posi-

tively of the propriety of putting *Morte d'Arthur* into the hands of boys, since there is certainly some ground for Roger Ascham's censure of it (quoted by Southey in a note to his edition of this romance) as a book 'in which those be counted the noblest knights that doe kill most men without any quarrel, and commit the fowlest adulteries by subtlest shifts,' and in which there is much false morality derived from that 'papistry which as a standing poole covered and overflowed all England;' though in the particular instances I know of boys reading this book (and I can refer to several), I can confidently say of it what Southey (in the note referred to) says generally—' notwithstanding the severity, and in some degree the truth of this censure, I believe that books of chivalry instead of increasing the corruption of the age, tended very greatly to raise the standard of morals.' But at least this objection will not apply to the Romances of Amadis of Gaul, and Palmerin of England, as revised by Southey, nor to Spencer's Faerie Queene, nor to the Tales of La Motte Fouqué several of which have been translated into English.<sup>1</sup> And while it becomes me to speak still more diffidently respecting girls than boys, I do not hesitate to say of these works of Fouqué that they exhibit alike the feminine and manly ideals of character in entire purity of thought and word, and that the English maiden may there study the virtues and graces of the Christian Knight and the Christian Lady with certain and unqualified profit and delight.

<sup>1</sup> *The Magic Ring, Undine, Sintram, Adanga's Knight* :—the last is to be found in Vol. I. of the 'Specimens of German Romance.' Fouqué was a German Baron who died a few years since, having proved himself no less Christian knight in his life—in peace and in war—than any of those old heroes whose virtues and prowess he delighted to tell of. Burke too was great lover of chivalry tales.







